

Hafa Adai!

Babauta seeks NMI Bar probe, sanction vs Torres' 2 counsels. **PAGE 2**

Marianas visitor arrivals up 1,234% in November 2021. **PAGE 5**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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www.facebook.com/saipantribune

41 new cases ID'd in NMI

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Forty-one individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19 through surveillance and travel testing on Jan. 15, bringing the CNMI total to 3,946 cases since March 28, 2020, according to the latest news release from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

One of three imprisoned for murder gets early release

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Board of Parole

has granted parole for one of three men who were imprisoned for murdering a security guard back in 2008 at the Mar-

ianas High School campus. Majority of the members of the CNMI Board of parole

See ONE on Page 4



SOLO FLIGHT

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres greets Lawrence C. Limtiaco upon his arrival on Saipan last Jan. 15, 2022, and congratulated him on making his second cross country solo flight from Guam to Saipan. After hours of flight school under the guidance of his instructor, Sarah Ando of AIRE Services LLC, Limtiaco flew solo to Saipan once more in a Cessna 172P. He is expected to make two more of these trips to complete solo flight requirements to test for his pilot license.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

» Eight hospitalized; 3.2K recoveries as of Jan. 12

In the news release issued late Sunday night, CHCC said that all 41 cases have been isolated and are being actively monitored, and the vaccination statuses of the cases were

pending verification as of Sunday night.

By identification method, 26 were identified through contact tracing, six through community testing, and nine

through travel testing.

Also, as of Jan. 16, eight individuals have been hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, five of them being unvaccinated.

See 41 on Page 4

MVP contest names 4 winners

A Saipan elementary school, a private citizen on Tinian, a

» Bus Stop Beautification Contest launched

Saipan restaurant, and the Tinian Mayor's Office were named yesterday as the winners of the Marianas Village

Pride Christmas Decorating Contest of the Governor's Council

of Economic Advisers, winning for themselves various prizes valued at \$1,000 each.

See MVP on Page 4

Rota Dems back Palacios-Apatang

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Palacios



Hix

The Rota Democratic Party has officially endorsed the gubernatorial candidacy of Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, instead of getting behind the candidacy of the party's

See ROTA on Page 4

» NMI Democratic Party chair Hix says party did not approve such endorsement

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:54pm, Jan. 17, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **97.9%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

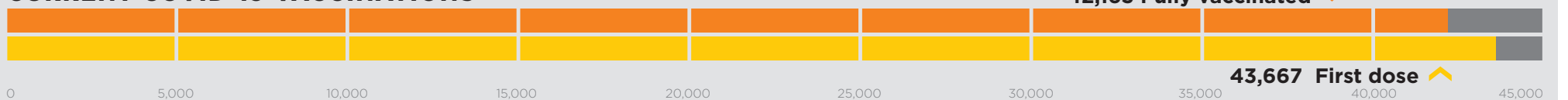
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,242
Fully Vaccinated:	35,924
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,308
Fully Vaccinated:	5,122
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	23,318	263	23,581
Recovered	19,390	21	19,411
Active	3,633	263	3,896
Deaths	274	0	274

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,905	41	3,946
Traced via Travel Screening	423	9	432
Traced via Community Screening	3,482	32	3,514
Deaths	21	0	21

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



INSIDE



LOCAL

New Zealand and Australia send military surveillance flights to Tonga to assess damage.

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NATION

Hundreds of mourners filled a Bronx mosque to bid farewell to those who died in a fire.

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ASIA

People who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are banned from public transport in Manila.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440

FAX: 235-3740

EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES CUC-RAESP-22-002

A&E SURVEY SERVICES FOR THE DANDAN HOMESTEAD WATERLINE AND SERVICE LATERAL REPLACEMENT (W20-074)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Survey Services of the DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement in DanDan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this contract is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this RAESP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government-observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RAESP package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 19, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-RAESP-22-002, A&E Survey Services for DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement”**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 8, 2022. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 24, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Mr. Kennet Jann R. Bernardo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email kennet.bernardo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22 – 006
REANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: January 5, 2022
Closing Date: January 19, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	Safety Technician
DEPARTMENT:	COA/Safety Office Division
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$20,826.00 - \$28,115.00 per annum, Non - Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	Two (2)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Assists with facility and site inspections to review and monitor compliance with safety and environmental regulations and standards; prepares and issues citations for corrective actions to address compliance violations.
- Responds to incidents and emergencies and assists with ensuring compliance with laws, rules and regulations; follows up to ensure issues are resolved and procedures are followed.
- Prepares incident and accident reports to document issues and corrective actions.
- Monitors equipment and supplies inventory; requests replacement stock to replenish inventory levels; ensures stock supply and preparedness for responding to oil spills or related incidents.
- Conducts or assists with a variety of informational workshops and/or orientations.
- Reviews project specifications and monitors field project work as needed.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and based on assignment, up to 2 years of related work experience.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Investigative techniques; Mitigation procedures; Safe work practices and procedures; Customer service principles; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing inspections to monitor safety and environmental compliance; Responding to emergency incidents to ensure corrective actions and proper procedures are followed; Monitoring equipment and supply inventory; Conducting and assisting with informational workshops and orientations; Reviewing project specifications and monitoring project work; Providing customer service; Preparing reports and related activity documentation; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing:

- Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- Hazmat and OSHA Certifications (Position may require)

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday (Except Legal Holidays), 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Local

CNMI's high COVID-19 vaccination rate 'exceptional'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As of last Friday, the CNMI's vaccination rate against COVID-19 was already at 97.5%—a feat that Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña described as “exceptional” and makes the CNMI a “global leader” in this aspect.

During a virtual press briefing last Friday, Muña credited both the tireless efforts of the CNMI's health workers and the cooperation of the CNMI community for the CNMI's high vaccination rate.

Muña thanked the community for coming together and getting vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19 and the CNMI's health workers for fulfilling their respective roles in the CNMI's efforts against COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is not over, however, and Muña asks all to continue taking all necessary precautions against COVID-19.

“I want to give our sincere appreciation to the health care and public health workers who have been working hard over the last two and a half months to contain the cases of COVID-19 in our community. They are indeed true heroes,” she said.

According to the www.vaccinatecnmi.com dashboard, as of yesterday, the CNMI is now at 97.9% vaccinated.

Muña noted that CHCC has been seeing a decrease in

cases since the rise in community cases beginning in Oct. 28 last year. However, the CNMI's total number of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths still remain a point of concern for her and CHCC. As such, Muña reminded the community to continue to take all necessary precautions against COVID-19.

“While we have seen a major decrease in cases since the beginning of this current wave of infections, the total number of cases and hospitalizations still remains too high. ... We

still need to protect ourselves and our community from COVID-19. ...The continuing cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in our community is an opportunity to remind everyone that the pandemic is not over,” said Muña.

So far, Muña said the omicron variant has not been found in the CNMI. “While we have no reports of omicron in the CNMI, this variant is spreading worldwide, and we must be prepared for a new wave of cases,” she said.

High surf, rip current until noon today

A high surf advisory and a high risk of rip currents are now in effect until noon today, Tuesday, on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Also, small craft advisory remains in effect until 6pm Thursday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves of 7 to 10 feet and dangerous rip currents will be present along north facing reefs of the Marianas until noon today. These will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Surf observations yesterday morning from Guam and Saipan continue to report hazardous surf along north facing reefs.

Also, northeast winds 15

to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots and seas of 7 to 10 feet will be present in Marianas coastal waters until 6pm Thursday.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Seas are expected to decrease starting Tuesday. Winds are expected to remain fresh to strong through Thursday, and could continue into the weekend. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these hazardous conditions.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions. Avoid venturing out toward north facing reefs. Elsewhere, swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (*Saipan Tribune*)

Babauta seeks NMI Bar probe, sanction vs Torres' 2 counsels

» **Birnbrich says he has a duty to represent, defend Office of the Governor lawfully and ethically**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) has urged the NMI Bar Association to investigate and sanction the two lawyers of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres for alleged professional misconduct and raising false allegations against her.

At the House's session last Wednesday, Babauta said the NMI Bar Association should investigate and possibly disbar Richard Miller, who is from a law firm representing Torres in the impeachment matter, and Gilbert Birnbrich, who is counsel for the Office of the

Governor.

Birnbrich said yesterday that, as a lawyer, he has a duty to represent and defend his client lawfully and ethically. “This I have done and will continue to do so as long as I am the attorney for the Office of the Governor,” he said.

He said Babauta is within her rights if she wants to file an ethics complaint against him. “If she does, I

have complete confidence in the fairness and professionalism of the attorney disciplinary process,” Birnbrich said.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still wait-

See **BABAUTA** on Page 4

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Rosa Mercedes)
Rickrik Taman)
(Name of Mother))
K.H.R.T.)
P.E.J.R.T.) FCD PA
(Name of Children)) CIVIL ACTION
Minor Children) NO. 21-0474
Plaintiffs,)
-vs.-) SUMMONS FOR
Peter Atalig Castro) PUBLICATION
Name of Alleged Father)
Defendant,)

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:
Peter Atalig Castro

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 501634 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 9th day of November, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court



Babauta

NMC, sports groups complete median rehabilitation projects



Faculty and staff of the Northern Marianas College come together on Jan. 14 to clean and repaint the Chalan Monsignor Guerrero medians in front of the Shell Dan Dan and Joeten Dan Dan store.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Partners and volunteers of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Public Private Partnership program started the year off by completing three community improvement projects.

The Northern Marianas Sports Association, Shirley's Football Club/Shirley's Coffee Shop, and Northern Marianas College completed Adopt-A-Median projects in high-traffic intersections on Saipan. The organizations gave streets, medians, curbs, and barriers much-needed facelifts and helped to improve the safety and visibility of the medians and curbs for motorists and pedestrians.

On Dec. 29, the NMSA transformed the Oleai Sports Complex parking lot and curbs in preparation for the Pacific Mini Games this June. On Jan. 11, the Shirley's Football Club/Shirley's Coffee Shop wrapped up its Adopt-A-Median project in Garapan by painting the borders around the intersection in front of the JG Sablan Ice & Water.

On Jan. 14, NMC volunteers repainted the Chalan Monsignor Guerrero medians in front of Shell Dan Dan.

Last month, seven groups and families completed major facelifts at intersections around Saipan. Four additional schools have committed to adopting medians on Tinian and Saipan during the first quarter of 2022. GCEA welcomes groups to sign up to adopt medians in their villages. Interested groups can register online at cnmieconomy.com.

GCEA extends a *si yu'us*

ma'ase' and *ghilisow* to NMSA, Shirley's Football Club/Shirley's Coffee Shop, and NMC for making Saipan safer and more beautiful for all residents. GCEA also thanks the Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Patrol for ensuring our partners and volunteers are safe.

About Adopt-A-Median program

The Adopt-A-Median program is an integral part of the GCEA's Marianas Village Pride campaign and the

Public Private Partnership Program. GCEA is accepting registration for projects in every village on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. Schools, groups, families, and businesses can adopt, clean, and paint medians, sidewalks, or crosswalks in their villages. GCEA will provide the supplies. For the safety of the students, GCEA recommend that school groups adopt sidewalks and crosswalks around their schools.

About GCEA

The Governor's Council of



Shirley's Football Club and Shirley's Coffee Shop volunteers wrap up its Adopt-A-Median project in Garapan by painting the borders around the intersection in front of the JG Sablan Ice & Water.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



The Northern Marianas Sports Association transforms the Oleai Sports Complex parking lot and curbs in preparation for the Pacific Mini Games this June.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Commonwealth Cancer Association
AWARENESS • EDUCATION • HOPE

2022 CCA Board of Directors & GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

The Commonwealth Cancer Association is inviting the community, cancer survivors, friends, and supporters to its annual general membership meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 3:00PM via Zoom.

The agenda will include the president's 2021 annual report as well as the treasurer's financial report. Immediately after the presentations, election of three (3) board members will commence. Nominations for board members will be accepted in advance via email and/or during the virtual zoom meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81145738608>

To submit board nomination, or for more information please contact CCA at 682- 0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB22-PAO-42200044
SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022 TIME: 9:00 A.M
"LEASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" FOUR (4) DOOR PICK UP TRUCK FOR THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORIGUCHI BLDG., GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY AND OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ PATRICK C. GUERRERO
GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB22-CHCC/PH-NCDB-009
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 4, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
"LEASE OF VEHICLE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

ONE

From Page 1

voted in favor of Eric Rabauliman's early release. Rabauliman and two others were sentenced to 26 years imprisonment for the murder of Efren L. Ballesteros, a security guard on duty at MHS when the three decided to break into the school and steal laptops.

According to board member Lucinda Rosario Selepeo,

she voted in favor of Rabauliman's release because she believes he showed remorse during his parole hearing. "I believe in second chances. I believe that everyone deserves a second chance. I know people are concerned about the severity of the actions, but we can all change. When they come here before the board feeling remorse, and they are very apologetic, then we know there's room for improve-

ment," said Selepeo.

Aside from Selepeo, board chair Ramon B. Camacho and Michael San Nicolas also voted in favor of Rabauliman's early release while Ignacio Mendiola wanted to make it clear that he voted against his release. The other board members declined to comment.

Meanwhile, Chester Hinds, Office of the Attorney General criminal division chief prosecutor, said Rabauliman's 13 years in prison is inadequate punishment for the crime that he had committed.

"The inmate has served 13 years, and has another 13 years remaining on this particularly heinous crime, the most serious offense we face as a society. Having served only 13 years is grossly inadequate considering his debt can never

be repaid. This type of deviant behavior demands significant incarceration to prevent the possibility of other acts of violence by this particular inmate," he said.

In addition, Hinds argues that based on Department of Corrections records, Rabauliman was sanctioned on seven separate occasions dating back to his first application for parole in 2018.

"The inmate was placed in isolation ranging between seven to 60 days of imposed sanctions, resulting from violations such as disrespect to staff, failure to cooperate in headcount, possession of class III contraband... a Samsung cell charger, failure to obey orders of staff on two separate occasions, as well as possession of snuff, also on two separate occasions. The inmate's actions

during his incarceration displays significant signs that the inmate fails to comply and adhere to instructions, rules, orders, and most importantly, the law. Clearly then, the inmate was not reformed and has had a continued disregard for rules and orders as indicated by his infractions. ...Such actions indicate a highly predictor of the inmate's inability to follow the law," he said.

Hinds also notes that in his most recent application for parole back in 2021, upon reviewing the Institutional Conduct Report dated Oct. 22, 2021, the OAG found that Rabauliman was cited again for several more citations, including assault and battery.

"Nothing seemed to work. The violations further listed assault and battery on June 16, 2020, and was sanctioned

for 15 days. Being in an unauthorized area, disorderly conduct on June 12, 2020 and was sanctioned for 15 days for each violation. Possession of cellular phone on Feb. 3, 2020 and was sanctioned for 60 days, and then again on Feb. 18, 2020, inmate was sanctioned for possession of cellular phone, and was sanctioned for another 60 days. Inmate was also disrespectful to staff on June 15, 2015, and was sanctioned to 15 days. It is clear, and evident that the inmate has not shown any respect, or has shown any good conduct since his first application for parole back in 2018. There is still a definite need for improvement, considering even while being incarcerated, the inmate continued to violate the rules," Hinds said.

MVP

From Page 1

Kagman Elementary School on Saipan won the award for Most Festive School, while Tinian resident Laila Macaranas was recognized with the Most Festive Home award. The Most Festive Business award went to Savory Bistro Café on Saipan, while the Tinian Mayor's Office on Tinian won the Most Festive Village plum.

A total of 19 schools, residents, businesses, and villages competed in the four categories during the holiday season to win prizes geared toward reinvestment in their homes, buildings, and schools.

As its prize, Kagman Elementary School won sports equipment valued at \$1,000, while Macaranas won hardware store credit valued at

\$1,000. Savory Bistro Café won paint store credit valued at \$1,000 and the Tinian Mayor's Office won village basketball court improvements valued at \$1,000.

"We thank our community for participating in the first MVP Christmas Decorating Contest," said Jerry Tan, co-chairman of the GCEA. "Each entrant committed to cleaning up in and around their homes, schools, and buildings while providing our community enjoyable and festive displays during the holidays. This is a wonderful example of how every resident, school, and business can improve the quality of life at the village level. Together, We Can!"

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

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From Page 1

ed and three vaccinated. Right now, one of the patients is on a ventilator and two have been discharged.

As of Jan. 12, there have been 3,206 recoveries and 431 active cases of the cases identified since Oct. 28, 2021.

For the latest in testing efforts, CHCC reported that 245 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Jan. 15: 163 were conducted through community-based testing, and 82 were conducted at the COVID-19 Community Center in Kobler for referrals only. To register for COVID-19 testing, CHCC asks you to visit <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>.

As of Jan. 12, there have been 3,206 recoveries, 431 active cases, and 18 COVID-19-related deaths of the cases identified since Oct. 28, 2021.

In related news, CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña said during a virtual news briefing last Friday that CHCC will continue to provide community testing, COVID-19 vaccines, and COVID-19 therapeutics to those in the CNMI that need them. Given the CHCC is the CNMI's sole hospital, she again asks the community to keep acting collectively in efforts against COVID-19.

"I want to remind everyone

that we are a single-hospital health system. ...We are working closely with our federal colleagues to be prepared for an increase in hospitalizations, and we really need the community to continue to come together [and] help each other reduce hospitalizations," said Muña.

To do your part in preventing hospitalizations, Muña urged the community to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, including booster shots if eligible, especially if you are over 60-years-old or have chronic health conditions. She also advised following the "3 W's", and if symptomatic, to see your health care provider right away to get screened and tested.

If you test positive for COVID-19, you may be eligible for monoclonal antibody treatment or for other COVID-19 treatments given soon after infection. Muña said you can get assessed for MAB eligibility at the COVID-19 Community Center in Kobler.

Muña said that testing, vaccines, and treatments will continue to be made available to those in the CNMI who need them. She added that CHCC is monitoring for the omicron variant, and that the hospital and the Alternate Care Site continue to prepare for any new surge of COVID-19 cases.

ROTA

From Page 1

standard bearer, Rep. Christina E. Sablan. NMI Democratic Party chair Nola K. Hix said yesterday that the party did not approve that Rota endorsement.

In a press release issued yesterday, the Palacios-Apatang camp said the Rota Democratic Party made the decision to endorse the candidacy of Palacios and Apatang as governor and lieutenant governor, respectively, during its meeting last Sunday.

Palacios and Apatang are running on an independent slate.

The press release includes a picture of Palacios and Apatang with some members of the Rota Democratic Party holding a banner that read: "Democrats for Palacios Apatang Rebuilding Trust 2022."

Hix said yesterday, though, that the NMI Democratic Party is the political organization that officially nominates and certifies candidates for CNMI

elections under the Democratic banner.

"The Democratic Party of the CNMI, as a political organization, has officially endorsed Representative Christina "Tina" Sablan as the party's gubernatorial candidate for 2022," Hix said.

The Palacios-Apatang press release states that Rota Democratic Party chair Norbert Mundo presided the well-attended meeting, which was held at the residence of Martin Atalig. Relevant party matters in the run up to the November 2022 general election were discussed at the meeting.

Palacios and Apatang arrived at the meeting and took the opportunity to listen to all the issues, challenges, and concerns raised.

Palacios and Apatang spoke at length of the people's current plight, the need to rebuild trust in government and leadership, and shared their focus and commitment to improving the lives of all people in the CNMI.

According to the press re-

lease, each closed their address by asking for the support of the people of Rota and thanking them for graciously having the Palacios-Apatang team on the island.

Those in attendance at the meeting included Pedro Dela Cruz, Geraldine Dela Cruz, Aniceto Mundo, Joseph Apatang, Maria Apatang, Janet Mundo, William Taitano, Eleanor Taitano, Martin Atalig, Cindy Barcinas, and Robert Ulloa, among others.

In the NMI Democratic Party's response to the Palacios-Apatang press release, Hix said the party did not approve nor release any photos, press releases, banners, or other materials depicting individual Democrats, former Democrats, or independents on Rota endorsing any other gubernatorial candidate.

Hix said they recognize that family ties play a crucial role in CNMI elections, and familial pressures can influence even close allies to switch political allegiances.

She said while they respect the political choices of all individuals, they also urge all political camps to ensure the transparency and accuracy of campaign information they disseminate.

Hix said the NMI Democratic Party remains committed to transparency and accuracy in all information they share that is critically important to the general well-being of the people of the Commonwealth.

"We will continue to carry out our campaign activities in accordance with this pledge. Trust can only be earned in this way," she said.

Hix said that, as they look forward to the announcement of Sablan's running mate later this month, they remind the people of the CNMI that, in the voting booth, "nobody knows where your pencil goes."

She said with Sablan and her running mate, and all their Democratic candidates, good governance will be on the ballot this November.

BABAUTA

From Page 2

ing for comments from Miller.

Babauta, who chairs the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee of the House of Representatives, said the Office of the Governor issued a press release last Jan. 7 that basically indicated that she, as JGO chairwoman, published untrue statements that amounted to distortion and misrepresentations of statements made by Torres.

She said in that publication, the governor's in-house legal counsel, Birnrich, essentially implies that she had placed a partisan spin on matters related to the dispute relating to the JGO's investigation into Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels.

Babauta read into the re-

cord the alleged inappropriate *ex parte* emails that were sent and received by Miller to the CNMI Supreme Court on Dec. 29, 2021, at 4:25pm. *Ex parte* refers to a court action by one of the parties without the other party being present/heard.

She said Miller emailed Nora Borja, the deputy clerk of the CNMI Supreme Court, that Torres is requesting a chamber's conference with Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro "sometime tomorrow, or prior to the expiration of the deadline" regarding the appointment of former judge Timothy Bellas to preside over Torres' lawsuit in Superior Court.

From this email, Babauta pointed out, there can be no doubt that Torres wanted a face to face meeting with Castro to discuss the selection of Bellas, who will preside over his lawsuit against the JGO. "It's right here in black and white. Gov. Torres is requesting a chamber's conference with Chief Justice regarding Judge Bellas' appointment sometime tomorrow prior to the expiration of the deadline," Babauta said.

In a press statement posted last Jan. 7, Birnrich denied a press release that Babauta issued, where she stated that Torres "attempted to manipulate the Judicial Branch

by requesting a closed-door meeting between himself and the chief justice."

Birnrich said this is not true as Torres did not seek a personal meeting with the chief justice and that Torres' counsel requested a conference to seek clarification, among other things, of the chief justice's order to notify the clerk of court of any "good cause or reason" why Bellas should not sit on the case.

Babauta said this attempt to meet with Castro in chamber off the record is inappropriate and highly unethical. She said it undermines the integrity of the legal process that the governor initiated when he filed the lawsuit against the JGO.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



Miller



Birnrich

Man who beat his girlfriend is sentenced to a year in prison

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Superior Court has sentenced a man to a one-year imprisonment term for beating his girlfriend and fleeing the scene before police arrived.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho sentenced Alvander Deleon Guerrero Pua, 28, to one-year imprisonment, with the first 10 months to be served day for day without the possibility of parole, probation, early release, work release, weekend release, or other similar program.

The judge warned Pua that the remaining sentence of two months is suspended and may be imposed in whole or in part in the event he violates any CNMI law or Office of the Adult Probation rules.

Camacho also gave Pua credit for the 49 days he has already served and his release date is set for Sept. 17.

Upon his release from the Department of Corrections,

Pua will be placed on probation for three years beginning on the date of his release and he will be subjected to the terms and conditions imposed by the Community Guidance Center or the Office of Adult Probation.

Pua pleaded guilty to two counts of assault and battery.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Pua was arrested in November last year. At the scene, police observed that the female victim had swollen eyes and dark bruising around both of them. The victim's face was reportedly swollen, and had redness and scratches, a swollen nose with both nostrils bleeding, blood on her upper lip, and redness around her neck. When asked, the victim told police that Pua was responsible for her injuries. Medics arrived and transported the victim to the Commonwealth Health Center for further medical attention. Pua was not arrested immediately after as he had fled the scene.

Many Rota and Tinian COVID cases reporting contact with other cases

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As of Jan. 14, there have been a total of six cases of COVID-19 identified on Rota and eight total cases identified on Tinian. It was learned that many of the cases reported contact with other cases, some of the cases on these islands reported a travel history to places with high COVID-19 rates, and others reported having close contact with other cases in coworking settings.

These details were learned during a Jan. 14 virtual news briefing attended by CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña and regional epidemiologist Stephanie Kern-Allely, during which Muña gave the latest updates on COVID-19 case numbers for Rota and Tinian.

On Rota, there have been a total of six cases, and all six have been isolated and are being actively monitored. Forty close contacts to the cases were identified, and all 40 tested negative for COVID-19.

On Rota, a total of 735 COVID-19 tests were conducted from Jan. 9 to Jan. 13. This number excludes COVID-19 testing conducted by the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services, which conducted 230 tests on Rota during this time. Daily surveil-

lance testing on Rota is available at the Rota Health Center, Monday to Saturday, 1pm to 3pm on all days.

On Tinian, there have been a total of eight cases, with four of these cases being confirmed on Jan. 13. Fifty-three close contacts to the cases were identified, and all 53 tested negative. From Jan. 10 to Jan. 13, 73 COVID-19 tests were conducted. Daily surveillance

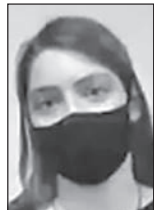
testing on Tinian is available at the Tinian Health Center, Monday to Friday, from 1pm to 2pm. Testing at THC is available from 12:30pm to 2:30pm on Saturdays.

According to Kern-Allely, many of the cases on both islands reported contact with other cases. Some of the cases had travel histories to known locations with high COVID-19 rates, such as Guam and the U.S. mainland. Some cases were linked to other cases in coworking settings, and other cases were reported as being family members and companions to other cases, among other things.

"There's a lot of cases of COVID globally right now, especially in areas where people may have recently traveled from. Some of the cases on Rota and Tinian are travel related, and some of them have working exposure," said Kern-Allely.



Muña



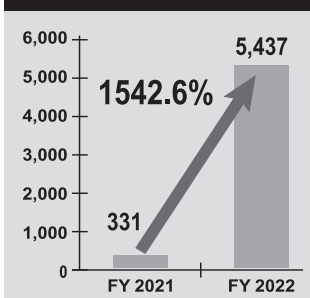
Kern-Allely

Marianas visitor arrivals up 1,234% in November

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota grew 1,234% percent to 2,482 visitors in November 2021, compared to 186 visitors received in November 2020.

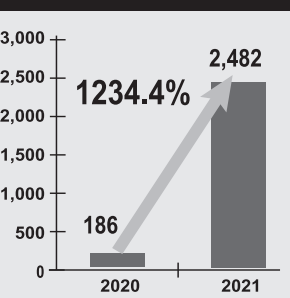
While the figure shows a marked recovery in arrivals as a result of the Tourism Resumption Investment Plan implemented by the MVA in July 2021, it is still a significant decrease from 39,717 visitors received in November 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating a continued challenging road ahead.

Visitor Arrivals Year to Date
FY 2021 vs. FY 2022



Almost all visitors in November arrived from South Korea, the Marianas' largest source market prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 2,127 visitors

Visitor Arrivals
Nov. 2020 vs. Nov. 2021



Source: Marianas Visitors Authority

arriving compared to only five visitors in November 2020.

Also, the Marianas received 167 visitors from Guam, 149 visitors from the U.S., and a

combined 39 additional visitors from all other destinations in November.

While the Marianas has seen declining demand from South Korea in December and January due to the omicron variant and other factors, the MVA and its tourism partners are optimistic about the rebound of the market in late January during the Lunar New Year holiday period and beyond. The Marianas is expecting approximately 5,000 passengers via Asiana Airlines, Jeju Air, and T'Way from Jan. 27 to Feb. 28, 2022. (MVA)

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS://WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport "Car Rental Concession" CPA-RFP-007-21 Request for Proposals for: CPA Concession No. CRS-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of approximately two years (contract to end on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-007-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS://WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport "Car Rental Concessions" CPA-RFP-008-21 Request for Proposals for: CPA Concession No. CRR-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport for a period of about two years (contract ends on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-008-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID ITB22-GOV-42200040

RENOVATION OF BUILDING 1314 FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING AGENCY

SUBMISSION DATE: **10:00 AM ChST FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the *Renovation of Building 1314 for the Criminal Justice Planning Agency* in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **January 18, 2022** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the project site located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST February 2, 2022**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to **Ms. Sunny Aldan** at **sunny.aldan@gov.mp** no later than **4:30 PM ChST February 8, 2022**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, February 17, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **Ralph DLG. Torres**
Governor, CNMI

/s/ **Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director**
CNMI Procurement & Supply

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID ITB22-GOV-42200018

SUBMISSION DATE: **9:30 AM February 10, 2022**

KALABERA CAVE REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the *Kalabera Cave Repairs & Improvements* in Marpi, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **January 13, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours. **This project will require US Treasury Listed Payment and Performance Bonds.**

A **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the project site, Marpi, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST January 26, 2022**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to **Ms. Nerissa Benavente** at **nerissa.benavente@gov.mp** no later than **4:30 PM ChST February 1, 2022**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30 AM February 10, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **Ralph DLG. Torres**
Governor, CNMI

/s/ **Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director**
CNMI Procurement Services

• SINAPALO • SONGSONG • SAN JOSE • AS LITO • AS MAHETOG • AS MATUIS • AS PERDIDO • AS TEO • CAPITOL HILL • CHALAN KANOA • CHALAN KIYA • CHALAN LAULAU • CHALAN PIAO • DANDAN • FINASISU • GARAPAN • GUALO RAI •



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#BeAnMVP #MarianasVillagePride #TogetherWeCanMarianas

Military flights sent to assess damage from Pacific volcano

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—New Zealand and Australia were able to send military surveillance flights to Tonga on Monday to assess the damage a huge undersea volcanic eruption left in the Pacific island nation.

A towering ash cloud since Saturday's eruption had prevented earlier flights. New Zealand hopes to send essential supplies, including much-needed drinking water, on a military transport plane later Monday.

Communications with Tonga remained extremely limited. The company that owns the single underwater communications cable that connects the island nation to the rest of the world said it likely was severed in the eruption and repairs could take weeks.

The loss of the cable leaves most Tongans unable to use the internet or make phone calls abroad. Those that have managed to get messages out described their country as looking like a moonscape as they began cleaning up from the tsunami waves and volcanic ash fall.

Tsunami waves of about 80 centimeters (2.7 feet) crashed into Tonga's shoreline, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described damage to boats and coastal shops.

No casualties have been reported on Tonga, although there were still concerns about people on some of the smaller islands near the volcano. The tsunami waves crossed the Pacific, drowning two people in Peru and causing minor damage from New Zealand to Santa Cruz, California.

Scientists said they didn't think the eruption would have a significant impact on the Earth's climate.

Huge volcanic eruptions can sometimes cause tempo-

rary global cooling as sulfur dioxide is pumped into the stratosphere. But in the case of the Tonga eruption, initial satellite measurements indicated the amount of sulfur dioxide released would only have a tiny effect of perhaps 0.01 Celsius (0.02 Fahrenheit) global average cooling, said Alan Robock, a professor at Rutgers University.

Satellite images showed the spectacular undersea eruption Saturday evening, with a plume of ash, steam and gas rising like a giant mushroom above the South Pacific waters.

A sonic boom could be heard as far away as Alaska and sent pressure shockwaves around the planet twice, altering atmospheric pressure that may have briefly helped clear out the fog in Seattle, according to the National Weather Service. Large waves were detected as far as the Caribbean due to pressure changes generated by the eruption.

Samiuela Fonua, who chairs the board at Tonga Cable Ltd. which owns the single cable that connects Tonga to the outside world via Fiji, said the cable appeared to have been severed about 10 to 15 minutes after the eruption. He said the cable lies atop and within coral reef, which can be sharp.

Fonua said a ship would need to pull up the cable to assess the damage and then crews would need to fix it. A single break might take a week to repair, he said, while multiple breaks could take up to three weeks. He added that it was unclear yet when it would be safe for a ship to venture near the undersea volcano to undertake the work.

A second undersea cable that connects the islands within Tonga also appeared



NZDF VIA AP

In this photo provided by the New Zealand Defense Force, an Orion aircraft is prepared at a base in Auckland, New Zealand, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022, before flying to assist the Tonga government after the eruption of an undersea volcano.

to have been severed, Fonua said. However, a local phone network was working, allowing Tongans to call each other. But he said the lingering ash cloud was continuing to make even satellite phone calls abroad difficult.

He said Tonga had been in discussions with New Zealand about getting a second outside communications cable to ensure a more robust network but the nation's isolated location made any solution difficult.

Ardern said the capital, Nuku'alofa, was covered in a thick film of volcanic dust, contaminating water supplies and making fresh water a vital need.

Aid agencies said thick ash and smoke had prompted authorities to ask people to wear masks and drink bottled water.

In a video posted on Facebook, Nightingale Filihi was sheltering at her family's home from a rain of volcanic ash and tiny pieces of rock that turned the sky pitch black.

"It's really bad. They told us to stay indoors and cover our doors and windows because it's dangerous," she said. "I felt sorry for the people. Everyone just froze when the ex-

plosion happened. We rushed home." Outside the house, people were seen carrying umbrellas for protection.

Ardern said New Zealand was unable to send a surveillance flight over Tonga on Sunday because the ash cloud was 63,000 feet (19,000 meters) high.

One complicating factor to any international aid effort is that Tonga has so far managed to avoid any outbreaks of COVID-19. Ardern said New Zealand's military staff were all fully vaccinated and willing to follow any protocols established by Tonga.

Dave Snider, the tsunami warning coordinator for the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, Alaska, said it was very unusual for a volcanic eruption to affect an entire ocean basin, and the spectacle was both "humbling and scary."

The U.S. Geological Survey estimated the eruption caused the equivalent of a magnitude 5.8 earthquake. Scientists said tsunamis generated by volcanoes rather than earthquakes are relatively rare.

Rachel Afeaki-Taumoepeau, who chairs the New Zealand

Tonga Business Council, said she hoped the relatively low level of the tsunami waves would have allowed most people to get to safety, although she worried about those living on islands closest to the volcano. She said she hadn't yet been able to contact her friends and family in Tonga.

"We are praying that the damage is just to infrastructure and people were able to get to higher land," she said.

Tonga gets its internet via an undersea cable from Suva, Fiji. All internet connectivity with Tonga was lost at about 6:40 p.m. local time Saturday, said Doug Madory, director of internet analysis for the network intelligence firm Kentik.

On Tonga, which is home to about 105,000 people, video posted to social media showed large waves washing ashore in coastal areas and swirling around homes, a church and other buildings. A Twitter user identified as Dr. Faka'iloatonga Taumoe'folau posted video showing waves crashing ashore.

"Can literally hear the volcano eruption, sounds pretty violent," he wrote, adding in

a later post: "Raining ash and tiny pebbles, darkness blanketing the sky."

The explosion of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano, about 64 kilometers (40 miles) north of Nuku'alofa, was the latest in a series of dramatic eruptions. In late 2014 and early 2015, eruptions created a small new island and disrupted international air travel to the Pacific archipelago for several days.

Earth imaging company Planet Labs PBC had watched the island in recent days after a new volcanic vent began erupting in late December. Satellite images showed how drastically the volcano had shaped the area, creating a growing island off Tonga.

"The surface area of the island appears to have expanded by nearly 45% due to ashfall," Planet Labs said days before the latest activity.

It's too early to tell how much ash was produced by the eruption because the volcanic cloud included vapor resulting from sea water interacting with the hot magma, experts said.

The eruption in shallow water may be similar to a series of eruptions between 2016 and 2017 that shaped Bogoslof Island north of the Aleutian Islands, said Michelle Coombs, a scientist at the U.S. Geological Survey's Alaska Volcano Observatory.

"When it erupts in shallow sea water, that interaction between hot magma and sea water adds extra energy to the explosion and creates taller and bigger ash clouds," Coombs said.

The ash cloud was drifting westward and aircrafts will be likely diverted around its periphery as a precaution, said Scott Bachmeier, a research meteorologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

NWS: No tsunami threat to Guam, CNMI

There is no tsunami threat to Guam or the CNMI from another eruption of an undersea volcano in Tonga.

According to the National Weather Service's Pacific Tsunami Warning Center Honolulu, sea level readings at Pago Pago harbor in American Samoa registered a wave with an amplitude of 36 cm and the NWS advisory stated that this might be from another explosion of the Tonga volcano. "There are no known earthquakes of significant size to generate this wave," it added.

According to the NWS advisory, no action is required in Guam and the CNMI and no tsunami impacts are expected.

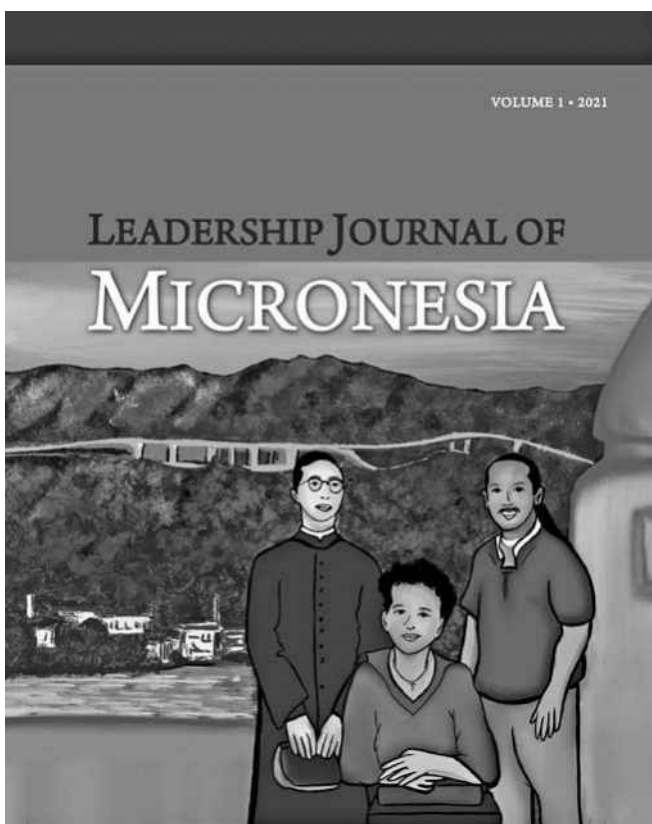
The underwater volcano first erupted last Saturday and it reportedly erupted again yesterday. (Saipan Tribune)

UOG ROTC to launch *The Leadership Journal of Micronesia*

In partnership with the University of Guam Press, the Department of Military Science at the University of Guam will be releasing its first volume of *The Leadership Journal of Micronesia* this week. The journal features the histories and accomplishments of 11 men and women who have served as notable examples of leadership in Micronesia.

The journal seeks to broaden awareness and appreciation of past leaders, including Maga'lāhi Hurāo, Agueda Johnston, and Fr. Jesus Baza Duenas, and to inspire current and upcoming local leaders through the examples of their predecessors.

Editor John Joseph Perez and co-editor Lt. Col. Thomas Anderson worked with graduate and undergraduate students in the university's Se-



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
The Department of Military Science at the University of Guam, in partnership with the University of Guam Press, will release its first volume of *The Leadership Journal of Micronesia* today, Jan. 18. The journal will be available for pickup starting Jan. 19.

nior ROTC program to research and write each piece featured in this premier issue.

"The most important credit goes to the writer-warrior scholars who endeavored to research and write about the regional leaders featured in this volume," Anderson said. "The undercurrent in their writing is their own experiences of persevering through a pandemic, which occurred while working to complete



Anderson

this issue."

The journal will launch today, Tuesday, with a private event adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. The launch will begin at 6pm and will be livestreamed for the public on the UOG Press Facebook page.

The Leadership Journal of Micronesia is available for pre-order at uog-press.com, and customers can pick up or purchase a copy at the UOG Press office, located on the second floor of the Micronesian Area Research Center on the UOG campus, starting Wednesday.

For additional information, contact UOG Press marketing communications coordinator Via De Fant at (671) 735-2153 or defantv@triton.uog.edu. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXII, Issue No. 12

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EDITORIAL

Confusing coronavirus message risks prompting Americans to tune out

Recommendations from the Biden administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention seem to change weekly regarding coronavirus precautions. Americans are justifiably confused and are at risk of tuning out. For a Democratic administration struggling to create the appearance of command authority during an ongoing national crisis, the mixed messaging feeds the Republican narrative that Democrats are incompetent.

Americans should, first of all, remember the pandemic response under the previous administration. President Donald Trump proposed on national television the consumption of cleaning fluid as a coronavirus remedy. He directly contradicted his own experts. He refused to wear a mask in public, becoming infected and requiring emergency treatment. But to Trump's credit, he spearheaded the crash development of vaccines that, today, are keeping people alive.

President Joe Biden in some senses had to build America's pandemic-response network from zero because of Trump's obstinacy and cultivation of a political environment that encouraged millions of Americans to reject masks and vaccines. Their refusal is the primary force behind new, record-high infection rates that are pushing health care resources to the breaking point. Such obstinacy also helps extend the life of the virus so it can continue mutating into more infectious variants such as the current omicron wave.

To convince the public that the experts know what they're talking about, and their advice should be followed, the administration's message must be delivered with greater clarity and consistency.

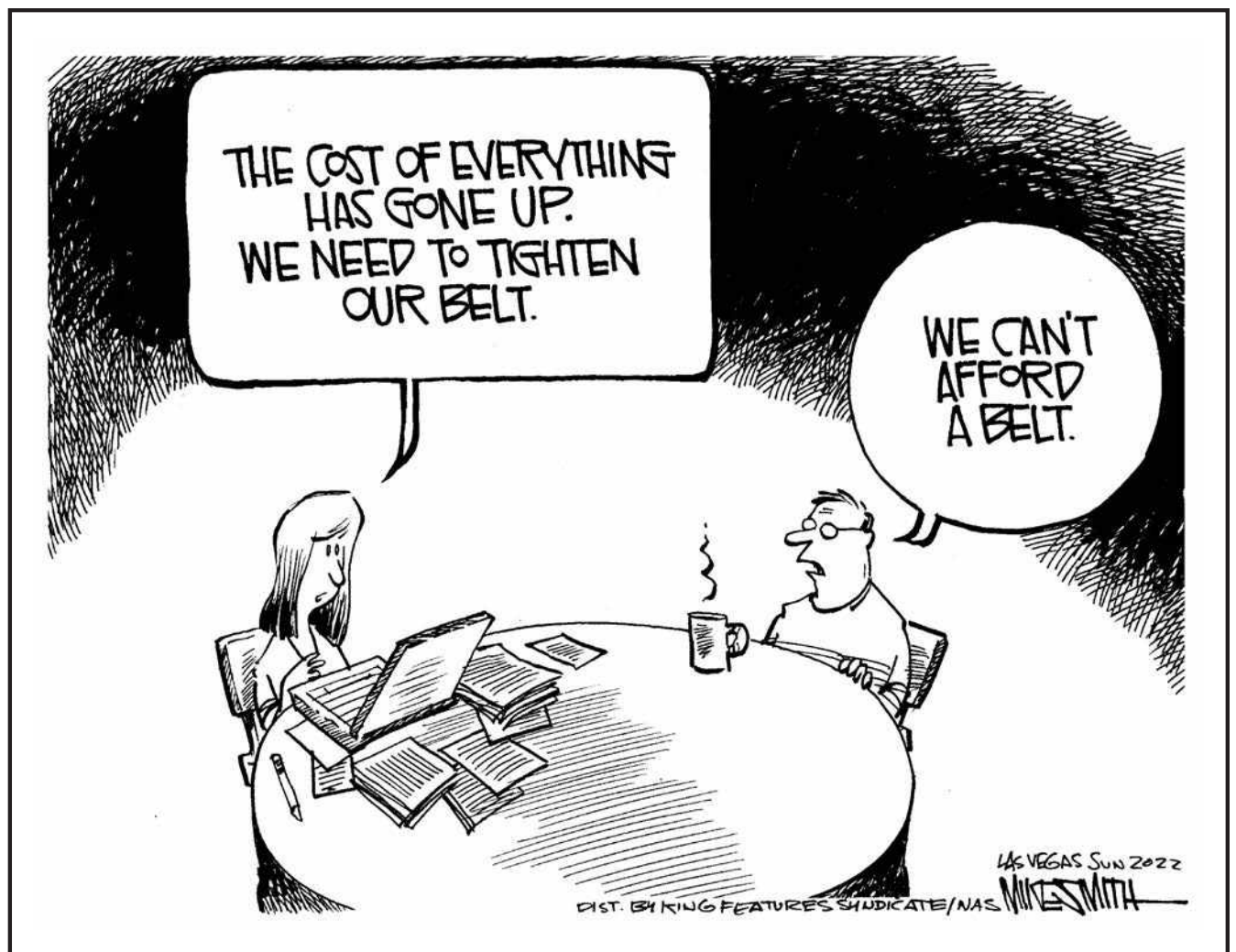
The pre-omicron quarantine period for people exposed to the virus used to be 10 days. Now it's five days, according to CDC guidance, or not at all, unless the person shows symptoms. Asymptomatic people can still be contagious, so they should stay at home. Or maybe just wear a mask. But forget about cloth masks; make sure it's an N95. Should students return to remote learning or stay in classrooms? Who knows?

Nationally, courts have flip-flopped on whether employers must comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules. The Supreme Court on Thursday blocked an administration rule requiring employees either to be vaccinated or submit to weekly testing and wear masks. Large companies that had just implemented the OSHA rules now could have to change course, adding to the confusion.

The CDC director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, says the virus's constantly changing nature creates a moving target. "You know, this is hard" to come up with a consistent, clear message, she told Fox News.

But the fundamentals haven't changed and bear repeating: The safest way to avoid infection is to avoid large

See AMERICANS on Next Page



Danger, pain, widespread inconvenience, and rescuers are overwhelmed

By LYNN SCHMIDT
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Let's consider a hypothetical scenario. Experts warn that a big, dangerous disaster is coming. But a large segment of the population decides to disregard it because, people reason, it surely will not affect them. But the problem arrives and hits the community anyway, causing widespread calamity, fear and anxiety. The situation seems to have no end in sight. Due to the nature of the disaster, it also causes isolation, which only perpetuates the fear, anxiety and frustration.

There are helpers working tirelessly to aid the community. The workers are so tired, they're not sure if they can keep working. Even high-ranking elected officials are affected by this adversity. There is no one person to blame and no single person who can solve the problem. The infrastructure in place is too overwhelmed with the numbers of people needing assistance. Fatigue and exhaustion set in. People begin to cast judgment on one another, questioning why their fellow citizens had voluntarily put themselves in such conditions.

Some readers might have assumed that I was speaking of the coronavirus pandemic. I was actually referring to the situation where drivers were stranded on Interstate 95 in Virginia for more than 24 hours in the freezing cold. As I read stories about the ordeal motorists experienced, I easily replaced the words in my head about the pandemic. Replace being stuck in a car and isolated with being stuck at home. In both those cases, a person may be stuck in a situation without the necessary supplies or with someone who could wind up carelessly inflicting harm on others.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam called the highway backup "an incredibly unusual event" after about a foot of snow blanketed the area around Fredericksburg. Department of Transportation officials said the winter weather started with rain, which would have washed away any treatment spread on roadways to prevent icing. The rain was followed by more than a foot of snow.

Consider how easily we could replace the term "meteorologist" with "public health expert." AccuWeather Chief Meteorologist Jonathan Porter said in a statement: "It was very unfortunate to see ... the suffering, anxiety and fear that so many people affected felt, especially when you consider it could have been avoided by more proactive responses based on the AccuWeather forecast that highlighted this very concern." Public health experts have been encouraging the proactive measures of getting

vaccinated and boosted, yet people, for a variety of reasons, have ignored the advice.

Marcie Parker, a Virginia Department of Transportation engineer, was quoted as saying, "That was entirely too much for us to keep up with." Her sentence could have easily been said by a health care worker. Parker stated the department was quickly overwhelmed when accidents and ice led to blockages that prevented clearance crews from unclogging the highway.

That is exactly what is happening to our health care system. Road crews in Virginia worked through the day and night and day again, in ice and snow, to free up the roughly 50-mile traffic jam. I imagine very few of those stuck in their cars even gave those rescue workers a second thought. Hospital workers continue to staff our hospitals despite feeling exhausted and burned out. The days of treating our health care workers as heroes have long expired. They are now being taken for granted.

NBC news correspondent Josh Lederman was also one of the helpless on the highway. "Nobody knows how long we're going to be here or how we are going to get out."

He added, "This is scary. You don't plan for a situation like this."

Two years ago there were probably very few of us who ever planned for a pandemic. As we enter our third year, people are asking how much longer we will be affected by this public health crisis.

It has become commonplace to judge one another during this pandemic. Just like the fact that we have no way to know why those hundreds of drivers were on I-95 as a huge storm loomed. Does it matter if they were on their way to work, picking up their child from day care, trying to get to a sick loved one, or just going on vacation? Of course not.

Positive stories from the disaster are trickling out as well. Drivers sharing food and water. Truck drivers showing kindness by sharing their heated cabs. These stories of resilience and generosity are examples of how societies can best cope with adversity.

Of course, the situations are markedly different, but we can certainly learn from one to help us cope with the other. Here are just a few of those lessons: Heed the warnings of experts. Be prepared, which in this context, means to get vaccinated and boosted. Be kind and generous. Stop being judgmental. Understand that there are people working tirelessly to get us unstuck. Finally, know that at some point, we'll all be on our way again.

Lynn Schmidt is a columnist and Editorial Board member of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Guam, a prime military target for the Chinese

Guam remains a key target for the Chinese military. During the Cold War Guam was a target of the Soviet military in part because Sumay was home to Navy submarines that carried intercontinental ballistic missiles containing nuclear warheads. Guam was also a choice Cold War military target because long range Air Force bombers

responsible for nuclear attack missions operated out of Guam.

Today Guam has several nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines, a host of tactical and special operations related activity, a variety of training organizations, and recurring presence of long-range bombers and fighters capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

The United States has not spent the money to fully protect Guam and the Chamorro people from military attack

But with all these weapons of war concentrated on our island, Chamorro Pacific Islander families, friends, and relatives are not fully protected and shielded from a missile attack. Guam and the CNMI have no nuclear bomb shelter infrastructure in place that villagers can go to in the event a ballistic missile is launched at our island chain. The THAAD in northern Guam and Navy ships equipped with Aegis ballistic missile defense systems offshore do not represent complete protection of Guam's villager population.

Mariana Islands critical infrastructure is not fully protected either and the writer doubts that it can withstand a major cyber-attack. Our island chain is dependent on space-based and under-sea-based communications infrastructure networks to operate on a daily and moment-by-moment basis.

To fully protect the Marianas and our Chamorro civilization from attack, the United States national government needs to spend hundreds of millions of dollars or more of additional public funds to provide real protections to save human life and protect critical informational and physical infrastructure.

Risks to military readiness that aren't readily apparent and need targeted attention

Sumay, Guam is home to five very dangerous, very expensive, and incredibly lethal nuclear-powered submarines. These submarines are getting old, and the Navy is at a point where Congress is not providing enough money to the military to buy more submarines to adequately replace the older models.

There are around 30 Los Angeles class submarines in the total Navy inventory and Guam has five of these boats. These vessels need more maintenance as they get older, and the Navy has decided to continue to keep these submarines in operation for longer periods of time. Some of these submarines will be getting new nuclear reactor cores to help keep them running for longer periods of time.

The age, constant wear and tear, and need for newer submarines as well as more tenders pose a challenge to overall sustained military readiness. The Chinese view Sumay as a valuable military target in part because of the high concentration of Los Angeles class submarines homeported on our island. The older they get, the more mileage they accrue, and the more use they get, the more wear and tear is experienced.

Why Guam will continue to be a prime military target for the Chinese

President Joe Biden wants more submarines in the water. The Navy has about 50 that are operational, and the President wants to see over 70 in the water. Future submarines will continue to visit Guam or be homeported at Sumay as the U.S. and China continue their respective military buildups.

Despite challenges to American submarine counts, select capability limits and age, the Chamorro people and villagers of Guam and the Northern Marianas are not fully protected from a future ballistic missile or hypersonic speed attack because the

Fighting for our environment, health, and well-being

By SHEILA BABAUTA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Rep. Sheila Babauta issued the following statement regarding the passage of House Joint Resolution 22-11 - To oppose any government's actions related to nuclear testing, storage, and waste disposal in the Pacific, and reaffirm everyone's fundamental right to a safe and healthy living environment:

Iwant to begin by thanking my colleagues in the House and, most recently, the Senate who voted to advocate for a safe and healthy environment. This resolution demonstrates that despite our political differences there are key issues where we must work together. Nuclear activity—especially the dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific Ocean—is an existential threat to all of us in the Marianas and globally. I also want to thank the Japanese Consulate Kazuhiko Ono for his input about the resolution as well as others who shared their thoughts.

This resolution details the history and current nuclear actions of other countries that have disproportionately impacted us Pacific peoples. Knowing this history and these current events is critical to tackling this issue and those like it. Issuing our

RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.

Marianas has nothing in place to neutralize an incoming weapon traveling at hypersonic speeds.

Guam and the NMI need congressmen who sit on the U.S. House Armed Services subcommittees

To grow public awareness, the congressmen from Guam and the CNMI who work on Capitol Hill have it in their interest to get on one or more of the subcommittees on Armed Services. This is so because the consequences of the ongoing military buildup to villagers are of highest importance.

The Pentagon is looking at constructing a shore-based Aegis combat system to further protect Guam from short-, medium-, or intermediate range ballistic missile attacks at presumably terminal phase. This possibility will augment Navy surface vessels that are currently assigned to carry out missile defense missions in the region to shoot down missiles both at midcourse and terminal phases. The problem with all of this is that the Navy doesn't yet have a sea-based option to take down a ballistic missile headed for Guam traveling at hypersonic speed.

Questions that remain unanswered

What are the Guam and CNMI congressmen going to do about advocating for real protections for villagers should Guam be attacked? Why are these leaders not asking the Pentagon about the status of a Guam-based Aegis combat system?

What service branch will man a shore-based Aegis system in Guam should one be constructed? Should the congressmen be asking the Pentagon if Guam Guard personnel can be assigned and trained to operate an Aegis shore-based system? Will the Pentagon experience a host of delays with constructing such a system, like the delays experienced with Aegis systems constructed in other parts of the world?

Will the Japanese and Korean navies be helping with missile defense and the protection of Guam and the CNMI by providing additional support to the American Navy in this capacity?

Will Guam be used as a future site intended to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles? Why are not the Guam and CNMI congressmen asking these questions?

As it stands, the writer does not believe that the American Navy is ready for a major regional hot war at sea against China. Our nation's Navy is not producing enough ships fast enough to keep up with China, logistical concerns remain, and as we have seen over the past 20 years, a variety of U.S. Navy surface ships and submarines have gotten into accidents in a peacetime environment that portends problems of the highest order, should China decide to directly fight the United States at sea.

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"Renewing is called into play when the battle is a stalemate and you and your opponent are making no progress. Then you must renew your mind and begin as if over again. Let go of your former rhythm and begin with a fresh and different one. Renewing means that when we are in a deadlock with the opponent and cannot change anything about our circumstances, we instead change our mindset and win by using a new tactic. It is vital to understand renewing in large-scale strategy as well."

—From The Fire Book, in The Book Of Five Rings, by samurai master Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1643).

I'm in the Mood for Zero

In these COVID times I'm in the mood for zero despite two vaccination shots and a booster virus variations remain the top anti-hero Dr. Fauci still the top epidemiology rooster

I see no Washington D.C. saint, savior, or hero while GOP blocks voting rights and Biden's plan infrastructure benefits them, their loss is zero but they vote against Dems, every woman and man

I'm in the mood for no more Senate obstruction simply because it seems very clear to me that partisan politics leads to the dysfunction of our democratic republic so dear to me

Those GOP opposed to POTUS 45 near zero the US loses, McConnell fiddles, his hero Nero.

Tails of a Frying Lying Chicken

Why did the Bigly chicken cross the road?
he was scared of numbers on the other side
Which came in first the chicken or the egg
the correct answer is donate up a \$ peg
When did the chicken cross the road?
he did it when a red hat fox came by
Who won the race, chicken or egg head
Egghead, chicken's brains were scrambled
Bigly Chicken chickened out hurt by ego
What did the chicken see across the road
no taxes, power, and foreign bank loans
Why do people follow the chickenfat slob
money, power, and politics, fear losing job
Yudono Idotu says, watashi wa "tonchiki"
speaking 'tongue in cheek' all this weekly.






AMERICANS

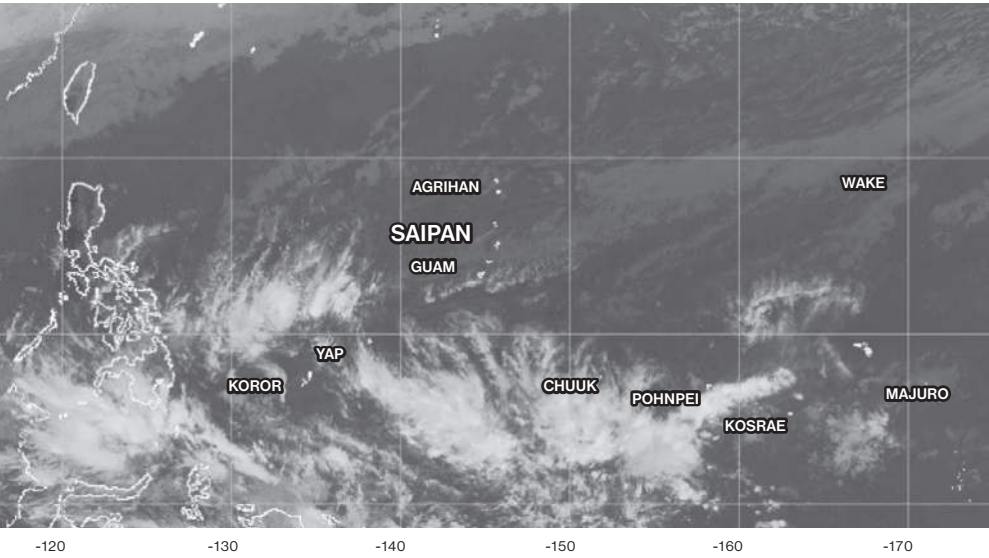
From Page 8

groups and wear a properly fitting mask. Fully vaccinated and boosted people are still vulnerable to infection but tend to have milder symptoms, whereas unvaccinated people are the ones currently overwhelming hospitals.

Why should exasperated members of the public not start tuning out? Because they could be the next ones seeking emergency hospital treatment. Given current wait times, it's far smarter to be overly cautious than throw caution to the wind.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly sunny with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly sunny with isolated showers		Breezy. Mostly cloudy with isolated showers	
86°	76°	76°	85°	78°	85°	86°	78°	86°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 11:04AM, MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Forecast was updated to extend High Surf Advisory and High Risk of Rip Currents along north facing reefs of the Marianas. Surf observations this morning from Guam and Saipan still report hazardous surf of 8 to 10 feet along north facing reefs. This suggest the north swell is not subsiding as quickly as forecasted. Wind waves from northeast winds, along with the northeast swell, are helping to keep surf high along north facing reefs.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	28 / 24 °F	
Palau	Isolated Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F	
Yap	Cloudy	29/ 26 °F	
Chuuk	PM Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	28 / 26 °F	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 27 °F	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	05:47 AM	18:48 PM
Wednesday	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Thursday	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Frrday	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Saturday	05:48 AM	18:49 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	05:10 PM	18:05 PM
Wednesday	-	05:56 PM	19:02 PM
Thursday	-	06:45 PM	19:59 PM
Frrday	-	07:35 AM	20:54 PM
Saturday	-	08:27 PM	21:47 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 17, 2022

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1,3,5,7	PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2,4,6,7
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA117/183				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA117/183				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
				TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3452	2:00PM	5:20PM	2	7C3451	8:00AM	1:00PM	3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Rising costs add to pandemic pain for small businesses

NEW YORK (AP)—In just two weeks, the cost of pecans for the pies at Peggy Jean's Pies in Columbia, Missouri, has surged nearly 40%, perplexing co-owner Rebecca Miller and adding to the cost of doing business. Miller will soon have to bump up the price of her Southern Pecan, Chocolate Bourbon Pecan, and German Chocolate pies by \$2 to \$24.

While pecans have risen the most, Miller is seeing price increases across the board, from blackberries to condensed milk and eggs. She consults with three food brokers weekly to source the lowest prices for ingredients. But she still needs to charge more for the nut pies.

"We can't absorb that cost and still meet wage demands, increased cost of goods in our tins and boxes, and afford to live as a family," she said.

Sharply higher costs are

yet another challenge thrown at business owners by the global pandemic. The unpredictability of shipping, labor and the coronavirus itself have created an environment where owners are often left guessing about when products might arrive and how much they'll cost. The Labor Department said Thursday that prices at the wholesale level rose a record 9.7% in December from a year ago.

"There's a tremendous amount of not just risk—risk you can calculate—but uncertainty. We just don't know what's going to happen," said Ray Keating, chief economist with the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. "Consumer demand is there, but there are just enormous supply chain constraints. All of this is feeding into price increases."

In response, owners are raising prices, cutting staff



Deena Jalal, owner of plant-based ice cream chain FoMu, works behind the counter in her shop on Tremont Street, Friday, Jan 14, 2022, in Boston.

hours, dropping some goods and services and nixing free shipping in a delicate balancing act. But with low visibility into how long the higher inflation will last, some owners are increasingly worried about keeping their doors open in the long run.

"We put out new fires every single day and have had to reassess the way we do business to cater to new behaviors," said Deena Jalal, owner

of plant-based ice cream chain FoMu and co-founder of wholesaler Sweet Tree Creamery in Boston.

For her FoMu shops, the cost of business overall rose about 15% in 2021 compared with 2020. She has raised prices about 10% but taken other measures, too: shifting to more delivery and cutting flavors like avocado ice cream, which became too expensive to make

as avocado prices rose.

"No business can sustain the rapid increase in expenses that we have seen in the last year," Jalal said. "You used to be able to work really hard and see progress. Now you work really hard just to try to stay afloat."

Jalal is apprehensive about the long-term prospects for the small business community if inflation doesn't calm down soon. "If we have to work this

puzzle for another two years, I really do think we'll see a lot of businesses—ourselves included—struggle to keep their doors open."

Elizabeth Benedict, owner of interior design firm Elizabeth Home Decor & Design in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, said prices have risen 7% to 30% for all the products she buys. She pays shipping surcharges on top of that.

"Most of these (increases) come with less than a two-week notice," she said. "We cannot guarantee any quotes that go out and have had to adjust our contract as well as all of our language on our proposals to reflect these variable conditions."

To deal with rising costs and overseas shipping delays, Benedict significantly changed her vendor list, and now shops only with U.S. brands that make products in the U.S. And she added services like e-commerce and virtual design. But she's still facing longer timelines for her projects and is not taking on new clients until things stabilize.

"We continue to pivot with the punches, but definitely feel like we are being pushed and pulled in too many directions," she said.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

COVID program delivers 1 billion doses to poorer countries

BERLIN (AP)—The World Health Organization said Sunday that a U.N.-backed program shipping coronavirus vaccines to many poor countries has now delivered 1 billion doses, but that milestone "is only a reminder of the work that remains" after hoarding and stockpiling in rich countries. A shipment of 1.1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Rwanda on Saturday included the billionth dose supplied via the COVAX program, the U.N. health agency said. WHO has long criticized unequal distribution of vaccines and called for manufacturers and other countries to prioritize COVAX. It said that, as of Thursday, 36 of its 194 member countries had vaccinated less than 10% of their population and 88 had vaccinated less than 40%. The program has made deliveries to 144 countries so far, "but the work that has gone into this milestone is only a reminder of the work that remains," WHO said in a statement.

Virgin Orbit successfully launches 7 satellites into orbit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Virgin Orbit rocket released from a jet flying off the California coast carried seven small satellites into space on Thursday as the company kicked off a year in which it

plans to ramp up the pace of launches, including two originating from Britain. Virgin Orbit's modified Boeing 747 took off from Mojave Air & Space Port in the Southern California desert, flew out over the Pacific Ocean and dropped the LauncherOne rocket from its left wing. The 70-foot-long (21.3-meter) booster ignited at an altitude of about 35,000 feet (10,668 meters) and hurtled skyward. The company later confirmed that all of the satellites were successfully deployed into the proper orbit.

No vaccine? No cafe, according to new French virus law

PARIS (AP)—France's parliament approved a law Sunday that will exclude unvaccinated people from all restaurants, sports arenas and other venues, the central measure of government efforts to protect hospitals amid record numbers of infections driven by the highly contagious omicron variant. The National Assembly adopted the law by a vote of 215-58. Centrist President Emmanuel Macron had hoped to push the bill through faster, but it was slightly delayed by resistance from lawmakers both on the right and left and hundreds of proposed amendments. More than 91% of French adults are already fully vaccinated, and some critics have questioned whether the "vaccine pass" will make much of a difference.

China's economy grows 8.1% in 2021, slows in second half

BEIJING (AP)—China's economy expanded by 8.1% in 2021 but Beijing faces pressure to shore up activity after an abrupt slump in the second half as the ruling Communist Party forced its vast real estate industry to cut surging debt.

Growth in the world's second-largest economy sank to 4% over a year earlier in the final three months of 2021, government data showed Monday. That was down from the previous quarter's 4.9% and an eye-popping 18.3% in the first three months of 2021.

Forecasters warn weakness will persist this year due to renewed coronavirus outbreaks and the debt crackdown. That has potential global repercussions, depressing Chinese demand for steel, consumer goods and other imports.

China rebounded quickly from the coronavirus pandemic, but activity slowed as Beijing tightened controls on borrowing by the real estate industry, causing a slump in construction that supports millions of jobs. That fueled consumer jitters about

spending and financial market anxiety about possible defaults by developers.

"Downward pressure on growth will persist in 2022," Tommy Wu of Oxford Economics said in a report. He said the government is likely to launch "policy support" to keep annual growth above 5%.

Growth in consumer spending, the economy's biggest driver, plunged to just 0.2% in December from the previous month's 3.9%. Growth in investment in factories, real

estate and other fixed assets decelerated to 1.7%, down from the full year's level of 4.9%, as developers canceled or postponed building plans.

Worsening weakness toward the end of 2021 prompted suggestions Beijing needs to cut interest rates or inject money into the economy through public works spending. The World Bank and private sector forecasters have trimmed this year's growth outlooks, though to levels above those of most other major economies.

At many churches, pandemic hits collection plates, budgets

By **HOLLY MEYER** and **HALELUYA HADERO**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Biltmore United Methodist Church of Asheville, North Carolina, is for sale.

Already financially strapped because of shrinking membership and a struggling preschool, the congregation was dealt a crushing blow by the coronavirus. Attendance plummeted, with many staying home or switching to other churches that stayed open the whole time. Gone, too, is the revenue the church formerly

got from renting its space for events and meetings.

"Our maintenance costs are just exorbitant," said the Rev. Lucy Robbins, senior pastor. "And we just don't have the resources financially that we used to have to be able to do the kind of ministry work that we would like."

Biltmore is just one of an untold number of congregations across the country that have struggled to stay afloat financially and minister to their flocks during the pandemic, though others have managed to weather the storm, often with

help from the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, and sustained levels of member donations.

The coronavirus hit at a time when already fewer Americans were going to worship services—with at least half of the nearly 15,300 congregations surveyed in a 2020 report by Faith Communities Today reporting weekly attendance of 65 or less—and exacerbated the problems at smaller churches where increasingly lean budgets often hindered them from things like hiring full-time clergy.

"The pandemic didn't change those patterns, it only made them a little bit worse," said Scott Thumma, director of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research and co-chair of Faith Communities Today.

Attendance has been a persistent challenge. As faith leaders moved to return to in-person worship, first the highly transmissible delta variant and now the even faster-spreading omicron have thrown a wrench into such efforts, with some churches going back online and others still open reporting fewer souls in the pews.

Nation

COVID deaths and cases are rising again at US nursing homes

By MEG KINNARD & BRYAN GALLION
ASSOCIATED PRESS

COVID-19 infections are soaring again at U.S. nursing homes because of the omicron wave, and deaths are climbing too, leading to new restrictions on family visits and a renewed push to get more residents and staff members vaccinated and boosted.

Nursing homes were the lethal epicenter of the pandemic early on, before the vaccine allowed many of them to reopen to visitors last year. But the wildly contagious variant has

dealt them a setback.

Nursing homes reported a near-record of about 32,000 COVID-19 cases among residents in the week ending Jan. 9, an almost sevenfold increase from a month earlier, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A total of 645 COVID-19-related deaths among residents were recorded during the same week, a 47% increase from the earlier period. And there are fears that deaths could go much higher before omicron is through.

Despite the rising numbers, the situation is not as dire as it was in December 2020, when

nursing home deaths per week topped out at about 6,200. Experts credit the high vaccination rates now among nursing home residents: About 87% are fully vaccinated, according to CDC data.

COVID-19 shots and boosters provide strong protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death, but the sick and elderly are uniquely vulnerable to the virus.

Nursing home officials say they are responding to the outbreak by limiting visitors to common areas instead of allowing them into residents' rooms, and by reinstituting social distancing.

Some states, like New York, have put their own measures in place, like requiring proof of a negative test for visitors and providing all with surgical masks.

Nursing homes are also working to drive up vaccination numbers, especially for boosters. Sixty-three percent of nursing home residents nationally have received an extra dose.

Booster numbers are much worse for staff members. About 83% are fully vaccinated, but only 29% have gotten an extra dose.

Nursing homes have been holding vaccine clinics and town hall meetings to stress

the importance of the shots.

They also got another tool to increase vaccinations Thursday when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Biden administration vaccine mandate for most health care workers in the U.S.

About 57,200 nursing home workers—by far the highest number on record during the pandemic—had the virus in the week ending Jan. 9, a more than tenfold increase from a month earlier, according to the CDC.

Sharon Wheeler was shocked to learn that her 88-year-old, dementia-stricken father recently contracted COVID-19 at a Naperville, Illinois, nursing home. She said she hopes the fact that he is fully vaccinated and boosted will help him pull through.

She said she suspects visi-

tors and residents coming and going around the holidays brought COVID-19 inside. Wheeler hasn't been allowed to see her father, but the staff told her he had mild symptoms.

"I worked so hard to make sure he never got (COVID-19), because I was so terrified," she said. "He's such an older man, and I don't want to lose him this way."

Vaccines are just one of the many tools that should be used to defend the elderly against omicron, said Eric Feigl-Ding, an epidemiologist and senior fellow at the Federation of American Scientists. He also recommended testing of visitors, mandatory boosters and the use of medical-grade masks like N95s and high-efficiency air filters.

Bronx fire victims' funeral draws huge outpouring of grief

NEW YORK (AP)—The caskets were brought one by one—all 15 of them—on a frigid winter day, as hundreds of mourners filled a Bronx mosque Sunday to bid farewell to those who died exactly a week ago trying to escape their smoke-filled apartment building.

Many hundreds more huddled outside, peering into the mosque's windows or watching on big-screen televisions, to pay their respects after New York City's deadliest fire in three decades.

"One week they were with us ... now they're gone," said Musa Kabba, the imam at the Masjid-Ur-Rahmah mosque, where many of the deceased had prayed. "Last Sunday it happened, and today we are about to bury these families. It is hard."

In all, 17 people died in the fire, which authorities said was sparked by a faulty space heater in a third-floor apartment. Among the dead were eight children as young as 2, whose tiny caskets underscored the day's loss.

All of those who lost their lives collapsed and were



Caskets sit on the floor during the funeral service for victims from the apartment building which suffered the city's deadliest fire in three decades, at the Islamic Cultural Center for the Bronx on Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022, in New York.

overcome by smoke while trying to descend the building's stairwell.

Sunday's mass funeral at the Islamic Cultural Center capped a week of prayers and mourning within a close-knit community hailing from West Africa, most with connections

to the small country of Gambia—where four of the victims would be buried, officials said. Eleven of the victims were transported to a cemetery in New Jersey.

Earlier in the week, burial services were held for two children at a mosque

in Harlem.

"This is a sad situation. But everything comes from God. Tragedies always happen, we just thank Allah that we can all come together," said Haji Dukuray, the uncle of Haja Dukuray, who died with three of her children and her husband.

Snow, ice blast through South with powerful winter storm

ATLANTA (AP)—A dangerous winter storm combining high winds and ice swept through parts of the U.S. Southeast on Sunday, knocking out power, felling trees and fences and coating roads with a treacherous, frigid glaze.

Tens of thousands of customers were without power in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida. Highway patrols reported hundreds of vehicle accidents, and a tornado ripped through a trailer park in Florida. More than 1,200 Sunday flights at Charlotte Douglas International were cancelled—more than 90% of the airport's Sun-

day schedule, according to the flight tracking service flightaware.com.

Winter Storm Izzy dumped as much as 10 inches of snow in some areas of western North Carolina as the system moved across the southeastern U.S., said Brian Hurley, a meteorologist with the Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

First Sgt. Christopher Knox, a North Carolina Highway Patrol spokesperson, said that by midafternoon, the agency had responded to 300 car crashes and nearly 800 calls for service. Two people died Sunday when their car drove off the road and

into trees in a median east of Raleigh. The driver and passenger, both 41-year-old South Carolina residents, were pronounced dead at the scene of the single-vehicle crash. Knox said investigators believe the car was driving too fast for the conditions, described as mixed winter precipitation.

Durham police tweeted a photo of a tractor-trailer that slid off the N.C. Highway 147 overpass in Durham. The truck's cab appeared to have landed upright on Highway 15-501 below, while the trailer came down in a vertical position from the bridge to the highway below. Police

spokesperson Kammie Michael said the driver was stable with injuries that did not appear life-threatening.

Kristen Baker Morrow's 6-year-old son made snow angels after their home in Crouse, North Carolina, got four inches of snow Sunday morning, but she said they couldn't stay outside long because of the uncomfortable wind chill.

"It took 30 to 45 minutes to get everything on for about 10 minutes in the snow, but it was definitely worth it for him, to get our pictures and make some memories," said Morrow, a 35-year-old registered nurse.

ACROSS THE NATION

Pilot of crashed medical helicopter released from hospital

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The pilot of a medical helicopter that crash-landed without loss of life next to a church in a residential area of suburban Philadelphia last week expressed gratitude to his crew and first responders as he was released from a hospital Sunday. The pilot, whose name has not been officially released, was wheeled out of the Penn Presbyterian Medical Center emergency room Sunday morning to applause from police and first responders and spoke to reporters before being taken home by ambulance with a police escort. "I'm just feeling fortunate, you know—I had God as my co-pilot that day and we took care of the crew and we landed in his front yard, so that was kind of nice," he said. The Eurocopter EC135 medical helicopter owned by Denver-based Air Methods, part of the LifeNet program based in Hagerstown, Maryland, was also transporting an infant girl and two other crew members when it came down at about 1 p.m. Tuesday next to Drexel Hill United Methodist Church in Upper Darby.

Bidens pack carrots, apples into boxes during food bank stop

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden packed carrots and apples into food boxes for the hungry and chatted with volunteers Sunday at a food bank as part of a day of service for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The couple traveled about a half-hour from their Wilmington, Delaware, residence to Philabundance, a hunger relief organization in Philadelphia which serves about 140,000 people a week in the Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey region. Before heading to the warehouse floor where conveyor belts carried cardboard boxes full of donated food, Biden said the child tax credit needed to be renewed. The traditional day of service is on the holiday, Monday, but there was a bad winter storm heading for the area and events were being rescheduled around the region.

Texas rabbi: Captor grew "belligerent" late in standoff

COLLEYVILLE, Texas (AP)—A rabbi who was among four people held hostage at a Texas synagogue said Sunday that their armed captor grew "increasingly belligerent and threatening" toward the end of the 10-hour standoff, which ended with an FBI SWAT team rushing into the building and the captor's death. Authorities identified the hostage-taker as a 44-year-old British national, Malik Faisal Akram, who was killed Saturday night after the last hostages ran out of Congregation Beth Israel around 9 p.m. The FBI said there was no indication that anyone else was involved but had not provided a possible motive. The investigation stretched to England, where late Sunday police in Manchester announced that two teenagers were in custody in connection with the standoff. Greater Manchester Police tweeted that counter-terrorism officers had made the arrests but did not say whether the pair faced any charges.

Asia

'No vaxx, no ride' policy on Manila public transit

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—People who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 were banned from riding public transport in the Philippine capital region Monday in a desperate move that has sparked protests from labor and human rights groups.

The Philippines's vaccination campaign has been dogged by public hesitancy and delays, while the highly contagious omicron variant has fueled a recent spike in infections. From less than a thousand new cases daily during the Christmas holidays, the Department of Health counted a record of more than 39,000 on Saturday.

Under the Department of Transportation's "no vax, no ride" policy, commuters who are not fully vaccinated will not be allowed to ride public jeepneys, taxis, buses, sea ferries and commercial planes to and from and within Metropolitan Manila unless they show proof that they are on urgent errands or cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. The restriction will last at least to the end of January and was an offshoot of President Rodrigo Duterte's warning that unvaccinated Filipinos who defy orders to stay at home



A resident reacts as a health worker inoculates him with the AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine at a vaccination center in Quezon City, Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. AP

to ease community infections could face arrest.

"There are indeed legitimate reasons for aiming to vaccinate as many people as possible. However, these reasons should not prevent people from freedom of movement," said Butch Olano of Amnesty International in the Philippines. Experts say the policy's legality could be questioned before the Supreme Court.

There were concerns how poor drivers of jeepneys, Manila's popular public transport icon, could efficiently enforce the restriction and check vaccination certificates while driving with passengers constantly getting on and off at

the back exit away from his view. Police warned commuters who show fake proofs of vaccination could be fined or jailed.

The Department of Transportation said the policy aims to foster public health and prevent public commuter train systems from being shut down again like last year after many of their personnel got infected. To "those saying that the 'no vaccination, no ride-entry' policy in public transport is anti-poor, draconian or punitive, we believe that it is more anti-poor and anti-life if we will not impose interventions that will prevent loss of life due to non-vaccinations," it said.

North Korea fires two suspected missiles

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea on Monday fired two suspected ballistic missiles into the sea in its fourth weapons launch this month, South Korea's military said, with the apparent goal of demonstrating its military might amid paused diplomacy with the United States and pandemic border closures.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North likely fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area in Sunan, the location of Pyongyang's international airport, but didn't immediately say how far they flew.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the missiles did not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel or territory, or to its allies, but highlighted the destabilizing impact of the North's "illicit" weapons program. Japan's Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said the missiles landed outside the Japan's exclusive economic zone, and the chief cabinet secretary, Hirokazu Matsuno, condemned North Korea's actions as threats to peace.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who is visiting the United Arab Emirates, instructed officials to make "utmost efforts to ensure stability" on the Korean Peninsula, his office said. It also said members of the presidential National Security Council stressed the need to revive nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang.

North Korea had conducted a pair of flight tests of a purported hypersonic missile on Jan. 5 and Jan. 11 and also test-fired ballistic missiles from a train Friday in an apparent reprisal over fresh sanctions imposed by the Biden administration last week for its continuing test launches.

North Korea has been ramping up tests in recent months of new missiles designed to overwhelm missile defenses in the region.

Some experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is going back to a tried-and-true technique of pressuring its neighbors and the U.S. with missile launches and outrageous threats before offering negotiations meant to

extract concessions.

A U.S.-led diplomatic push aimed at convincing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program collapsed in 2019 after the Trump administration rejected the North's demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Kim has since pledged to further expand a nuclear arsenal he clearly sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.

His government has so far rejected the Biden administration's call to resume dialogue without preconditions, saying that Washington must first abandon its "hostile policy," a term Pyongyang mainly uses to describe sanctions and combined U.S.-South Korea military exercises.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said the North may have conducted another launch to pressure Washington and could continue to dial up its testing activity after vowing stronger action over what it perceives as U.S. hostility.

World

Omicron exposes inflexibility of Europe's public hospitals

STRASBOURG, France (AP)—A World Health Organization official warned last week of a "closing window of opportunity" for European countries to prevent their health care systems from being overwhelmed as the omicron variant produces near-vertical growth in coronavirus infections.

In France, Britain and Spain, nations with comparatively strong national health programs, that window may already be closed.

The director of an intensive care unit at a hospital in Strasbourg is turning patients away. A surgeon at a London hospital describes a critical delay in a man's cancer diagnosis. Spain is seeing its determination to prevent a system collapse tested as omicron keeps medical personnel off work.

"There are a lot of patients we can't admit, and it's the non-COVID patients who are the collateral victims of all this," said Dr. Julie Helms, who runs the ICU at Strasbourg University Hospital in far eastern France.

Two years into the pandemic, with the exceptionally contagious omicron impacting public services of various kinds, the variant's effect on medical facilities has many reevaluating the resilience of



A medical staff member tends to a COVID-19 patient in the intensive care unit of the Strasbourg University Hospital, eastern France, Thursday Jan. 13, 2022. AP

public health systems that are considered essential to providing equal care.

The problem, experts say, is that few health systems built up enough flexibility to handle a crisis like the coronavirus before it emerged, while repeated infection spikes have kept the rest too preoccupied to implement changes during the long emergency.

Hospital admissions per capita right now are as high in France, Italy and Spain as they were last spring, when the three countries had lockdowns or other restrictive measures in place. England's hospitalization rate of people with COVID-19 for the week ending Jan. 9 was slightly higher than it was in early

February 2021, before most residents were vaccinated.

This time, there are no lockdowns. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, a population health research organization based at the University of Washington, predicts that more than half of the people in WHO Europe's 53-country region will be infected with omicron within two months.

That includes doctors, nurses and technicians at public hospitals.

About 15% of the Strasbourg hospital system's staff of 13,000 was out this week. In some hospitals, the employee absentee rate is 20%. Schedules are made and reset to plug gaps; patients whose needs aren't critical must wait.

Ukraine says Russia behind cyberattack

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine said Sunday that Russia was behind a cyberattack that defaced its government websites and alleged that Russia is engaged in an increasing "hybrid war" against its neighbor.

The statement from the Ministry of Digital Development came a day after Microsoft said dozens of computer systems at an unspecified number of Ukrainian government agencies had been infected with destructive malware disguised as ransomware. That disclosure suggested the attention-grabbing defacement attack on official websites last week was a diversion.

"All evidence indicates that Russia is behind the cyberattack. Moscow continues to wage a hybrid war and is actively building up its forces in the information and cyber-spaces," the ministry statement said.

The attack comes as the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine looms and dip-

lomatic talks to resolve the tense standoff appear stalled.

Microsoft said in a short blog post Saturday that it first detected the malware on Thursday. That would coincide with the attack that simultaneously took some 70 Ukrainian government websites temporarily offline.

Microsoft said in a different, technical post that the affected systems "span multiple government, non-profit, and information technology organizations." It said it did not know how many more organizations in Ukraine or elsewhere might be affected but said it expected to learn of more infections.

On Sunday, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said U.S. and private-sector companies were still working to determine the source of the attacks. He said the United States has warned for months about the possibility of cyberattacks from Russia and has been working with Ukraine to improve

that country's defenses.

"This is part of the Russian playbook," he said on CBS television's "Face the Nation" program.

A top private sector cybersecurity executive in Kyiv, Oleh Derevianko, told The Associated Press that the intruders penetrated the government networks through a shared software supplier in a supply-chain attack like the 2020 SolarWinds Russian cyberespionage campaign that targeted the U.S. government.

In 2017, Russia targeted Ukraine with one of the most damaging cyberattacks on record with the NotPetya virus, causing more than \$10 billion in damage globally. That virus, also disguised as ransomware, was a so-called "wiper" that erased entire networks.

In Friday's mass web defacement, a message left by the attackers claimed they had destroyed data and placed it online, which Ukrainian authorities said had not happened.

Overdrive

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

If you're a fan of Volkswagen hatchbacks, no doubt you're saddened that Volkswagen is no longer bringing the normally aspirated Golf to the United States; it's now only available as the pricier, sportier GTI. But that doesn't mean that VW is abandoning that part of the market. In its place is the new 2022 Volkswagen Taos, which starts at a reasonable \$22,995.

But the new Taos isn't a hot hatch inflated to 150 psi. In fact, it's not sporting at all. Instead, it's a wagon-like transportation appliance that competes in an increasingly crowded space against such players as the Chevrolet Trailblazer, Ford EcoSport, Honda HR-V, Hyundai Kona, Jeep Compass, Kia Seltos, Mazda CX-30, Nissan Kicks and Subaru Crosstrek. But unlike them, it sports handsomely uncluttered, refined styling that's timeless and gratifyingly mature. It doesn't look like an escapee from a video game. In fact, it resembles an Atlas Cross Sport that was left in the dryer too long, but that's not a bad thing.

Open the door and you'll be surprised by the Taos' expansive cabin. Full-size Americans can actually inhabit the back seat without complaint—head and leg room are generous. Seating is very comfortable and supportive. Ambience is similar to that of other VW SUVs, being a symphony of stark, hard plastic, albeit well assembled and designed



Low price and spacious cabin make handsome 2022 VW Taos a compelling crossover

(VOLKSWAGEN/TNS)
All-wheel drive Taos models have three driving modes: Normal, Sport and Individual, offering different steering heft and throttle response.

with ergonomic simplicity.

Offered in ascending S, mid-range SE and top-of-the-line SEL trim, the Taos employs the MQB platform that underpins the larger Tiguan.

While you might be tempted by the S trim level's low base price, it's better to opt for the SE, which adds such niceties as full keyless access, remote start, an eight-way power driver seat with lumbar, heated front seats, heated side mirrors, heated washer nozzles, leatherette-wrapped multifunction steering wheel, and privacy glass.

Lower-priced models come with an 8-inch digital instrument cluster, a 6.5-inch center infotainment touchscreen and two USB ports. Pricier models get a 10.3-inch instrument cluster and an 8-inch info-

tainment screen, Bluetooth, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and three USB ports. SEL models include navigation and a Beats audio system.

Lift the hood and you'll be greeted by a 1.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine derived from the unit used in the Jetta, rated at 158 horsepower and 184 pound-feet of torque. Front-wheel-drive models get an eight-speed

automatic transmission while 4Motion all-wheel-drive models come with a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission for a sportier feel, along with normal, sport and individual driving modes. But there's a difference in fuel economy; the front-wheel-drive Taos returns an EPA-estimated 31 mpg in combined city/highway driving, compared to 28 mpg for the 4Motion Taos. The latter costs

\$5 more per tankful to fill, and costs \$150 more annually in fuel costs.

Standard on SEL trim and optional on other models, Volkswagen's IQ.Drive is a semi-automated driver assistance system with forward collision warning, autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian monitoring, blind spot monitor, rear traffic alert, adaptive cruise control with stop and go, lane keeping assist and emergency assist. Opting for this package also gives buyers access to Travel Assist, which enables partially automated hands-on driving up to 95 mph, and is activated by a steering wheel button. We found it to be only marginally useful, as most of these systems are.

Of course, if you loved

the Golf's driving dynamics, you'll find the Taos to be a different animal. Acceleration is more than sufficient for daily driving duties despite its turbo lag, so planning is called for when you need a sudden dose of power—especially off-the-line. However, that's not unusual for this market segment. While the ride possesses the compliance you expect of a crossover, the worst bumps and road abrasions pound through. Cornering brings out body lean, unexpected given its relatively firm ride. While there's nothing wrong with the Taos' overall behavior, it feels fairly vanilla for a Volkswagen. Why not endow it with more of the European style flavor buyers might be expecting? Of course, the same could be said of all of the vehicles Volkswagen makes for America.

Still, the 2022 Volkswagen Taos' low price, spacious cabin and reasonable fuel economy make it well worth considering. That said, unless you truly need all-wheel drive, opt for the SE with front-wheel drive; most buyers will never truly need the added complexity, weight and poorer fuel economy of the 4Motion model. Besides, adding four-wheel drive in a higher trim level prices this puppy above that of the larger Tiguan, which negates the whole point of buying an entry-level model. Choose your options carefully and you'll find the Taos to be an accommodatingly efficient crossover—and a very handsome one at that. Just don't expect the fun driving experience of a GTI.

NUTS & BOLTS

2022 Volkswagen Taos

- Base price: \$22,995
- Engine: 1.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder
- Horsepower/Torque: 158/184 pound-feet of torque
- EPA fuel economy (city/highway): 25/32 mpg

- Fuel required: Regular unleaded
- Length/Width/Height: 175.8/72.5/64.6 inches
- Ground clearance: 6.4 inches
- Payload: 937 pounds
- Cargo capacity: 27.9 cubic feet
- Towing capacity: Not rated

MOTORMOUTH: How jog your car's memory

Q: I have a Jeep Grand Cherokee in warranty and I stopped by a dealer because my memory seats stopped working. Was told it would be a two-week wait and would be tied up all day. Made an appointment. The next week got an oil change for my wife's car at my local mechanic and mentioned Jeep seat problem to the service writer. He told me just use the forward-backward power switch all the way each way and it will reset it. When I got home, I tried it and sure enough it works again. I wonder what the dealer would have charged if it was out of warranty?

A: One of life's mysteries is why things lose their memories, but as you found, those memories can sometimes be restored. If your power windows stop working properly, try the same thing. Put them down and hold the switch for three seconds and then up and



DREAMSTIME/TNS

If your power windows stop working properly, try the same thing. Put them down and hold the switch for three seconds and then up and hold for three seconds.

hold for three seconds. Voila.

Q: Some drivers have their wiper blades pulled up and away from the front windshield during snowfalls. Does this help the longevity of the wiper blades with them in this up position off the windshield?

A: Yes, it does extend the life

of the blades. How? It keeps them from freezing to the glass. Many motorists damage their wiper blades when scraping snow and ice from the windshield. Sometimes they forget to turn the wipers off when parking and, upon startup the next day, the squeegee (rubber part) suffers damage. Even mi-

nor damage results in streaks, which always seem to occur directly in your line of vision.

Q: I have a 2020 Nissan Titan two-wheel-drive and when I took it in for an oil change, I was informed that I need a brake line flush and to replace the brake fluid, check and/or replace at 15K miles to 30K miles. I pull a travel trailer, so I went with the fluid flush and replacement at 22K miles. I have been driving for more than 50 years and this is the first time I have ever heard of this, and it is in the manual! Is it really necessary?

A: If it is in the owner's manual (the vehicle Bible/Torah/Quran/...), then yes, it is necessary.

Q: I read your article about pulsing brake lights. I do agree they are annoying, and they should not be allowed. However, as I'm sure you're getting emails that some new

By BOB WEBER

Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



cars are coming stock with the CHMSL (third brake light) pulsing. Honda and Toyota are apparently doing this. I've started seeing some GM products with it too.

A: Although strobing brake lights are available in the aftermarket, that doesn't make them legal. You can't blame car owners who want to improve their safety, but Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) state that only solid glowing brake lights are

allowed, albeit at a brighter level than taillights. There may be some car dealers that up-sell customers to strobing CHMSLs (center high-mounted stop lights) and to the best of my knowledge it is not illegal to sell them. Displaying them, however, is another matter. Federal law does not prohibit the owner of the car from installing them. Check the law in your state to determine whether a flashing third brake light is permissible.

Life & Style

'Scream' scares off 'Spider-Man' with \$30.6M debut

NEW YORK (AP)—After a month at no. 1, "Spider-Man: No Way Home" has finally been overtaken at the box office. Paramount Pictures' "Scream" reboot debuted with \$30.6 million in ticket sales over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Scream," a self-described "requel" that is both the fifth film in the franchise and a reboot introducing a new, younger cast, led all releases over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend. Paramount forecasts that it will total \$35 million including Monday's grosses. "Scream," which cost about \$24 million to make, added another \$18 million in 50 international markets.

That made for a solid revival for the self-aware slasher franchise. Rights to the "Scream" films, once a reliable cash cow for Harvey and Bob Weinstein's Miramax Films, were acquired by Spyglass Media Group,



(PARAMOUNT PICTURES VIA AP)

This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Ghostface in a scene from "Scream."

which produced the new film with Paramount. This "Scream," helmed by Matt Bettinello-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, was the first not directed by Wes Craven, who died in 2015. It features original "Scream" cast members Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox and David Arquette alongside new additions Melissa Barrera, Jenna Ortega and Jack Quaid.

Most notably, "Scream" is the first box-office success in a year that Hollywood hopes will see a return to weekly stability at movie theaters. January is typically a quiet period at the box office, but the surge of the omicron variant in COVID-19 has further upended release plans of some winter movies.

"All of our traditional measures were indicating a solid opening, but as I kept telling

people: We're still in this thing and it's very difficult to determine what will actually happen," said Chris Aronson, distribution chief for Paramount. "Now we're open, people have seen the movie and we're off and running. Hopefully this becomes another building block toward building the business back and getting it back to some semblance of normalcy." Meanwhile, "Spider-Man:

No Way Home" slipped to second place but continued to rise in the record books.

"No Way Home" grossed \$20.8 million in its fifth weekend of release. Sony Pictures predicts that with another \$5.2 million on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, "No Way Home" will reach a domestic cumulative total of \$703.9 million Monday, edging "Black Panther" and moving into fourth place all-time. That puts it behind only "Avatar" (\$760 million), "Avengers: Endgame" (\$858 million) and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" (\$936 million). Globally, "No Way Home" has grossed \$1.6 billion.

Universal Pictures' "Sing 2" landed in third place in its fourth weekend with \$8.3 million over the three-day weekend. The animated sequel has grossed \$122.1 million domestically and \$96.3 million internationally.

While the debut of

1. "Scream,"	\$30.6 million.
2. "Spider-Man: No Way Home,"	\$20.8 million.
3. "Sing 2,"	\$8.3 million.
4. "The 355,"	\$2.3 million.
5. "The King's Man,"	\$2.3 million.
6. "Belle,"	\$1.6 million.
7. "American Underdog,"	\$1.6 million.
8. "West Side Story,"	\$948,000.
9. "Licorice Pizza,"	\$880,000.

"Scream" could be celebrated by Paramount, which postponed most of its top 2021 releases to 2022 (movies including "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Mission Impossible 7"), its performance also typified current box-office realities. Superhero movies and genre films that appeal to younger audiences have bounced back to near pre-pandemic levels, while films skewing older haven't.

Prince Harry files court claim over UK police protection

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry has filed a claim for a judicial review against the British government's decision not to let him personally pay for police protection while in the U.K.

The Duke of Sussex's legal representative said Saturday that Harry wants to bring his children Archie and Lilibet to visit his home country from the U.S. but that is too risky without police protection.

The representative said Harry wanted to fund the police protection himself. His

private security team in the U.S. doesn't have adequate jurisdiction abroad or access to U.K. intelligence information, they said.

"The Duke and Duchess of Sussex personally fund a private security team for their family, yet that security cannot replicate the necessary police protection needed whilst in the U.K.," a statement said.

"In the absence of such protection, Prince Harry and his family are unable to return to his home."

The claim to a judicial re-

view was filed in September to challenge the British government's decision-making behind the security procedures.

Harry and his wife Meghan lost publicly funded police protection in the U.K. when they stepped down as senior working royals and moved to North America in 2020.

The couple said their decision was due to what they described as unbearable intrusions and racist attitudes

of the British media.

The couple first went to Canada before settling in the United States. They stated that

they privately funded security for their move to the U.S. after then President Donald Trump said his government wouldn't pay for their protection.

The statement said Harry's security was "compromised due to the absence of police protection" during a short visit to the



Prince Harry

U.K. in July, when his car was chased by photographers as he left a charity event.

Harry and Meghan's 7-month-old daughter Lilibet has yet to meet her great-grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, and other members of the royal family.

The statement said Harry first offered to personally pay for U.K. police protection for himself and his family in January 2020, during talks with the queen over the Sussexes' future. The offer was "dismissed," the statement said.

"The goal for Prince Harry has been simple—to ensure the safety of himself and his family while in the UK so his children can know his home country," it said. "The UK will always be Prince Harry's home and a country he wants his wife and children to be safe in."

Britain's government said its security system is "rigorous and proportionate" and declined to comment on details. It also said it was inappropriate to comment on any legal proceedings.

Parent of child isn't ready to get married

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend, "Dyanne," and I recently had a baby conceived not long after we started dating. While I love my child with all my heart, Dyanne is constantly dropping hints that she wants an engagement ring or a "promise ring." I understand why because she has explained her reasons. But she's pressuring me to provide something I believe should come when I feel comfortable doing it.

While some would say I don't act like it, I'm traditional in some ways for a millennial. I believe that when I give someone a ring, it should be because I plan to marry her. I don't consider marriage the way most do, and think I can just get divorced and it's no big deal. I think Dyanne puts too much emphasis on what others think and that's one of the reasons she wants a ring.

Am I wrong to stall until I feel ready to actually propose and not just say, "Sure. One day we will, and here's a ring in the meantime"?

UNENGAGED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR UNENGAGED: Nowhere in your letter did you mention that you love Dyanne. You should not give her a ring and keep her in a holding pattern if you aren't sure you want to follow through with the commitment. Be honest. Tell her you care about her and love your child and

intend to responsibly co-parent with her, but you are not ready for marriage and don't know when you will be. That's the truth.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a volunteer tour guide for several historic sites. One of them is a cemetery. My fellow guides and I are concerned—not to mention saddened—when we see children running around unsupervised, and standing on and climbing on the gravestones. Cemeteries are sacred places in which the dead should be remembered and honored.

When parents or caretakers allow children to use the cemetery as a play area, they fail to teach them respect for the dead or for the survivors who are visiting the graves of their loved ones. They also place their children in danger. Gravestones can fall or tip over. Children have been killed or seriously injured by toppling stones. Flat grave markers can be tripping hazards. When we caution parents about these dangers, we are often met with indifference.

Please urge your readers to take our concern for their children's safety seriously and control their children's activities in cemeteries.

CONCERNED TOUR GUIDE

DEAR CONCERNED: I'm pleased to pass along your

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



message because it is an important one. Cemetery etiquette is simple: Treat the graves as you would the graves of your own cherished loved ones, or as you would like your own to be treated. This includes no loud chatter, and because there are people in mourning there, not walking on the graves, not leaving chewing gum on the gravestones, keeping pets leashed — if they are brought there at all — and teaching children the difference between a cemetery and a playground.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

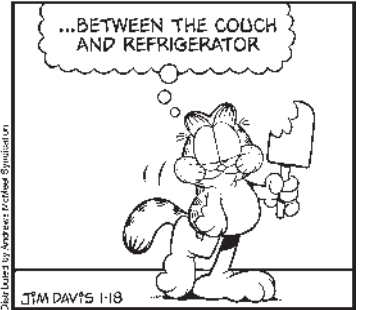
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



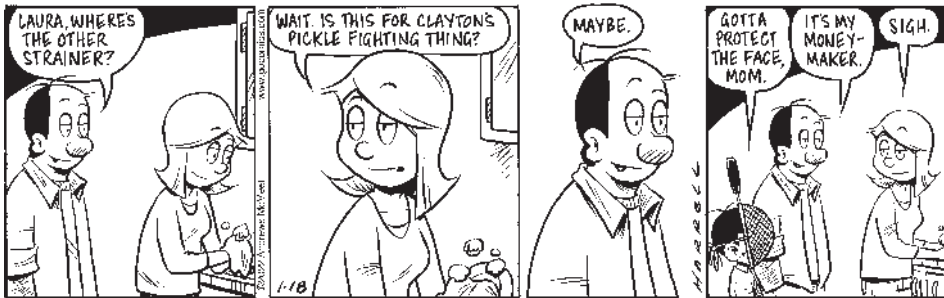
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



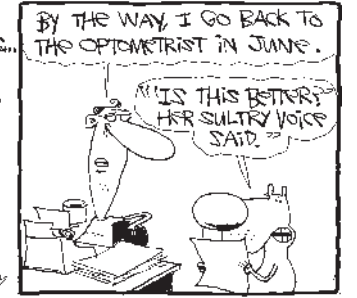
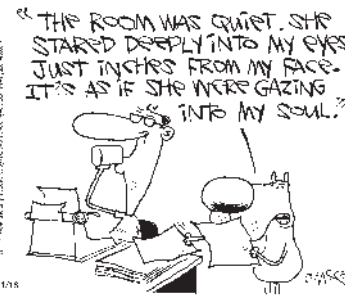
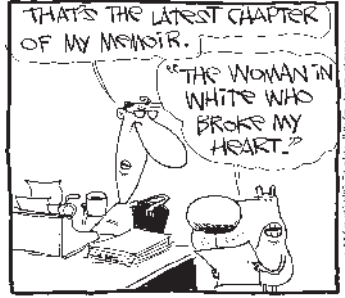
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Flair
5 Enterprise letters
8 Stuffing herb
12 Taunt
13 Aussie hopper
14 Hockey legend Phil, to fans
15 Home of the Packers
17 Compared to
18 Congeal
19 Sturdy tree
20 Spassky's game
21 —
22 Huge
23 Bottom
26 Fear-stricken
30 "E Pluribus —"
31 Blue hue
32 Lighten
33 Arly area
35 Hinder
36 Sailor

DOWN

1 Omelet needs
2 Old Italian money
3 Help a crook
4 Born abroad?
5 City-related
6 Drench
7 Sauce source
8 "The Italian Job" actor
9 Tennis champ Arthur
10 Transcript stats
11 Eternities
16 Dark film genre
20 Spy org.
21 Color named for a fruit
22 Journalist Nellie
23 Gist
24 Year in Spain
25 "Gee, ya think?"
26 Alias abbr.
27 Yoga pad
28 Jargon suffix
29 Aachen article
31 Bro or sis
34 '60s chic
35 Challenge
37 El Greco's birthplace
38 Gratis
39 Joan of rock
40 Aware of
41 Author Harte
42 To be, in Toulon
43 Some July babies
44 Endure
46 Wildebeest
47 Up-to-date

Solution time: 22 mins.

A	I	M	I	V	S	N	A	N	A		
S	H	A	W	S	I	P	A	R	I	D	
O	T	A	P	E	R	T	A	T	S		
S	P	A	S	M	W	I	F	I			
A	C	H	I	E	V	E	A	N	O	D	
L	I	O	N	P	A	W	A	K	I	N	
B	A	R	G	E	T	A	B	L	E	T	S
S	O	N	T	A	G	D	O	M			
C	U	R	S		N	A	C	H	O		
D	A	W	N	A	P	T	L	O	C		
E	G	A	D	T	R	E	L	P	G	A	
B	O	S	C	E	Y	E	Y	S	L		

Yesterday's answer 1-18

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jason Segel, 42; Jesse L. Martin, 53; Mark Messier, 61; Kevin Costner, 67.

Happy Birthday: Take your time, think things through and make decisions based on your needs. Put your health and well-being first and strive to look and feel your best. How you handle situations will determine the opportunities you receive along the way. A domestic change will encourage you to let go of the past and strive for a better future. Your numbers are 4, 16, 21, 26, 30, 38, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Use your intelligence wisely. Get involved in events that offer information that discloses all angles. Being prepared will help you make better decisions when time is right. A change of heart will point you in a new direction. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You'll find it challenging to stick to one thing. Promising more than you can deliver will not bode well with superiors. Put your physical strength and energy where they will bring the highest return. Actions speak louder than words. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Spend more time with your peers, and you will gain perspective regarding the best way to move forward. Eliminate individuals from your circle who are indulgent. Intelligence and determination will lead to success and happiness. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Save for something worthwhile. Think about the changes you can make to improve your community, relationships, qualifications and ability to get ahead. Broaden your interests, informa-

tion and skills. A partnership will encourage new trends. Romance is featured. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Emotions will surface if someone tries to interfere with your plans. Don't make changes because someone else does; do what's best for you. An intelligent and healthy approach to life, love and your relationships with others will help you gain respect. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You'll gravitate toward unique people and pastimes. The more you indulge in something foreign to you, the easier it will be to recognize what's possible. Execute your plans with detail and precision, and positive change will follow. Romance is in the stars. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be smart; provide valid reasons for the changes you make. A proactive approach, an open mind, and expressing compassion and understanding will help keep the peace and encourage the help you require to reach your goal. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't labor over something you can't change. Take physical action, and do what you can to make your life better. Expand your interests, friendships and activities. Make home improvements that will benefit your health and well-being. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Money and emotions will lead to confusion and costly mistakes. Rethink your financial plan, and choose to put spending limits in place. Refuse to let anyone talk you into an expense that will tax your standard of living. Say no to indulgent behavior. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take the time to make your surroundings conducive to what you need and want to be successful. A personal change will lift your spirits and fetch compliments. An affectionate signal will spark your interest. Share something special with someone you love. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take notice of what's going on around you. Be open to suggestions, but don't go out of your way to please someone who doesn't reciprocate. Be fair, not gullible. Don't be prone to letting others take advantage of you. ★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Leave nothing to chance or unfinished. A spontaneous motion will result in an emotional setback. Work alongside people who are striving for the same results as you. Build a solid base, strong relationships and good work ethic, and you'll excel. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are enthusiastic, changeable and resourceful. You are opportunistic and playful. ★★ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★ Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

2	7	5		4	3	8		
			2	6			1	
4							9	
	6					3		
3							5	
	9				7			
6							2	
1			5	9				
8		2	6		9	4	7	

Difficulty Level ★★

1/18

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	7	1	2	4	5	9	3	8
8	3	4	6	7	9	5	1	2
5	9	2	3	8	1	7	4	6
3	4	5	1	2	6	8	9	7
2	8	9	4	3	7	6	5	1
7	1	6	5	9	8	4	2	3
9	5	7	8	1	2	3	6	4
4	2	8	9	6	3	1	7	5
1	6	3	7	5	4	2	8	9

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

LOUIS XIII COGNAC

Solution: 10 letters

M T J C R A E P S E P A R G E
A I A O A R E E E E D E G U S
D R N R H S C A M V M N Q Y R
E C O I A N K R R I O I A E A
R I M M A C E L E S N F T R B
U S E R A T C E H U S N A O G
S S F L S T U A R L A A T D C
A A B A M L I R B C B T L R G
E L M E T A L C E X L O Y G N
R C C R C B G D S E G S X T I
T R U O P E S N O I T I D E K
E N I V H L L M U A R T X E S
K N S L I O S L L M P A U L A
I Y R U X U L I A M B E R N L
G R O U P U I F O R C A T E F

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1/18

Alcohol, Amber, Aromatics, Baccarat, Bars, Black, Bottle, Boxes, Cask, Cellar, Classic, Coin, Crystal, Decanter, Editions, Exclusive, Extra, Film, Fine, Flask, France, Glass, Gold, Grande, Grapes, Group, Hectares, Hermès, John, King, Label, Luxury, Magnum, Master, Metal, Miniature, Paul, Pearl, Pour, Puffcoat, Rare, Soils, Song, Spear, Treasured, Trunk, Unique, Vine
Yesterday's Answer: Grand Dame
To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 50, 51 and 53 through 66, order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

49ers hang on over Cowboys 23-17 in chaotic wild-card finish



ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—

Kyle Shanahan walked onto the field with an emphatic nod, believing his San Francisco 49ers had beaten the Dallas Cowboys in a chaotic wild-card finish that left many not sure what was happening.

The official word came a short time later.

Deebo Samuel ran 26 yards for a touchdown for a comfortable lead in the third quarter before the Cowboys rallied and ran out of time trying to get a final play in the 49ers' 23-17 victory Sunday.

"I'm still trying to figure out where I'm at," Shanahan said after coaching San Francisco's first playoff victory at Dallas in a storied postseason rivalry. "It's pretty emotional out there. Lots of opportunities to win the game. Those guys (Cowboys) just kept fightin'. We made a couple mistakes there at the end. We shouldn't have let it get there."

The 49ers (11-7) overcame an interception by Jimmy Garoppolo when they led by 13 in the fourth quarter, and now are headed to a divisional playoff next Saturday night at Green Bay two years after reaching the Super Bowl and losing to Kansas City.

The wait for Dallas (12-6) to reach even an NFC championship game will tick up to 27 years after another first-game flameout in the postseason for Dak Prescott, the second in three trips over six seasons for the star quarterback. It was his first playoff game since signing a \$40-million-a-year contract in the offseason.

Prescott ran for a touchdown to get Dallas within a score after Garoppolo's interception, and he had plenty of time to get his team in front for the first time on a drive that ended near midfield. His desperation fourth-down pass was just out of receiver Cedrick Wilson's reach.

A 14th penalty from the NFL's most-penalized team in the regular season helped San Francisco run out most of the clock, and the 49ers intended to go for the win on fourth down when a run from Samuel ended up short — by inches after the ball was nudged up on review.

Instead, San Francisco punted after a false start, giving Dallas one more chance. Without enough time, as it turned out.

The Cowboys started at their 20 with 32 seconds to go. Wilson pitched to CeeDee Lamb on a hook-and-ladder play for 20 yards, and Dalton Schultz gained 9 yards before getting out of bounds with 14 seconds remaining.

Prescott took off on a de-



San Francisco 49ers middle linebacker Fred Warner, left, celebrates with quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo (10) after the 49ers defeated the Dallas Cowboys in an NFL wild-card playoff football game in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022.

signed run and slid at the end of a 17-yard run, with about eight seconds to go. Umpire Ramon George bumped Prescott trying to set the spot. The snap from the San Francisco 24 came after the clock expired.

Dallas coach Mike McCarthy suggested Prescott was slowed by the collision with George, and that a sideline official assured him the play was being reviewed.

"The communication that I was given on the sideline was they were reviewing it," McCarthy said. "They were going to put time back on the clock. And the next thing I know, they're running off the field."

Players from both teams streamed onto the field immediately after Prescott took the snap and spiked the ball, and many did a U-turn as officials discussed the play. Then referee Alex Kemp announced the game was over.

"It was like the whole day, it really was," Garoppolo said of the final sequence. "It was a dogfight, hell of an atmosphere out here. I mean, the fans were nuts. It was everything we thought it was going to be. It was fun."

Kemp said in a pool report George was trailing the play at a proper distance and acted appropriately to get the ball spotted correctly. The umpire has to touch the ball before another play can happen.

Kemp said the decision that the snap came after the clock had expired was made on the

field, not on a replay assist from New York.

"The umpire was simply spotting the ball properly," Kemp said. "He collided with the players as he was setting the ball because he was moving it to the proper spot."

The 49ers were in control in the fourth quarter, but not leaning on the running game they figured could carry them to a win when Garoppolo threw an interception to Anthony Brown that set up Prescott's 7-yard scoring run.

Garoppolo's mistake wasn't long after Prescott was picked off at the Dallas 26 by K'Waun Williams and Samuel ran untouched on a cutback up the middle to the end zone on the next play for a 23-7 lead.

San Francisco lost star pass rusher Nick Bosa to a concussion just before halftime when he was crunched in the head and neck area by teammate D.J. Jones. But the 49ers kept enough pressure on Prescott, finishing with five sacks while holding the NFL's No. 1 offense to 307 yards.

"Guys just stepping up big in big key situations, that's really what it was all day," Garoppolo said. "Early on, we got it rolling with the offense and the defense just throughout the entire day. We got some dogs on our defense, man. It's fun."

San Francisco scored on its first four possessions, but three times settled for field goals from Robbie Gould to help keep the Cowboys close.

Rookie Elijah Mitchell ran for 96 yards and the game's first points on a 4-yard run. Samuel had 72 yards on 10 carries and three catches for 38 yards.

As was the case most of the season, Dallas couldn't get the running game going with Ezekiel Elliott. The two-time rushing champion had 31 yards on 12 carries as the Cowboys were outgained 169-77 on the ground.

Prescott was 23 of 43 for 254 yards. Garoppolo, whose future with the 49ers beyond this season is uncertain with rookie Trey Lance waiting his turn, was 16 of 25 for 172 yards.

Dallas was down 13-0 when Prescott threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to Amari Cooper. The Cowboys had the final possession of the first half and the opening drive of the second half to get closer and couldn't.

"The team should not have been in a position to make that last play be something controversial," Dallas owner Jerry Jones said. "I'm not going to make it bigger than it is."

The talk shows will do that for him.

Buccaneers 31, Eagles 15

In Tampa, Fla. as the game clock expired, Tom Brady raised his arms in triumph along the sideline, whirled and tossed a football into the stands.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers and their jubilant 44-year-old quarterback took the first

step on what they hope will be a journey back to the Super Bowl, dominating the Philadelphia Eagles 31-15 in a NFC wild-card playoff victory Sunday.

"It only gets tougher from here," said the seven-time Super Bowl winner, who's trying to help the Bucs become the first team to repeat as NFL champions since the Brady-led New England Patriots won back-to-back titles in the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Tampa Bay (14-4) set the tempo from the start, with Brady leading a pair of long TD drives in the opening quarter and building the lead to 17-0 by halftime.

The three-time league MVP finished off the Eagles with TD passes of 2 yards to Rob Gronkowski and 36 yards to Mike Evans, improving his dazzling playoff record to 35-11 in a record 46 postseason starts.

The Bucs defense did its part, too, intercepting Jalen Hurts twice in the Philadelphia quarterback's playoff debut.

"We did some good things," Brady said. "I think we're just going to have to keep doing what we did today. Everyone's got to touch it, make some explosive plays. Did a good job possessing it, the defense played great, so it was a great team win. Special teams played awesome — one of the best days we had on special teams all year."

Brady completed 29 of 37 attempts without an interception while extending his postseason

record for TD passes to 85.

But the Bucs had matters well in hand before the reigning Super Bowl MVP found Gronkowski wide open in the middle of the end zone to make it 24-0 midway through the third quarter. The 6-foot-5 Evans punctuated his TD catch for a 31-0 lead with a front flip over the goal line.

Brady targeted Evans 10 times, completing nine of the throws for 117 yards. He's 5-0 in postseason games since joining the Bucs in 2020 after 20 seasons with the Patriots.

"I don't ever take it for granted," Evans said of Brady's leadership. "When he came to this team I knew he was going to change the franchise. He's done that and then some. He makes sure we're always ready to play. He makes sure that we know what we're doing and he makes sure that we give it our all. That's all you can ask for from a leader."

The Eagles (9-9) scored on Boston Scott's 34-yard run and Hurts' 16-yard TD pass to Kenneth Gainwell both in the fourth quarter. A 2-point conversion trimmed Philadelphia's deficit to 16 with 4:45 remaining, but that was as close as it would get.

"We didn't play good enough today, I didn't play good enough today," said Hurts, who was wearing a protective boot on his left foot after the game.

Chiefs 42, Steelers 21

In Kansas City, Mo., Patrick Mahomes threw for 404 yards and five touchdowns, Travis Kelce caught a TD pass and threw another one, and Kansas City sent Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger into his anticipated retirement with a blowout of the Steelers.

Byron Pringle caught touchdown passes from both Mahomes and Kelce, and Jerick McKinnon and Tyreek Hill also had scoring catches — as did offensive tackle Nick Allegretti — as the Chiefs (13-5) began their pursuit of a third straight AFC championship in fine style.

They scored on six straight possessions during the middle part of the game, shut down Roethlisberger and the rest of the Pittsburgh offense, and turned next Sunday night's divisional-round game against Buffalo into appointment viewing.

Roethlisberger, who admitted the Steelers (9-8-1) were "not a very good football team" this week, wasn't very good in his own right. The 39-year-old quarterback was 29 of 44 for 215 yards with two meaningless TD passes late in the game, providing the coda to a career that includes six Pro Bowl trips and two Super Bowl wins.

Booker, McGee help Suns rout Pistons in Michigan homecoming



DETROIT (AP)—Devin Booker scored 30 points and JaVale McGee added 20 in their Michigan homecomings to help the NBA-leading Phoenix Suns rout the Detroit Pistons 135-108 on Sunday.

"I was just hitting shots and the guys were getting me the ball in good places," said Booker, from Grand Rapids. "I never got to see the Pistons play in person very often—I grew up about two hours west of here—so I love coming here to play what was my favorite team growing up."

Booker made 11 of his first 14 shots from the field. He said he had 40-50 friends and family at the game after having numerous guests when the Suns played in Indiana on Friday night.

"Because of the pandemic, I didn't get to have anything like normal interaction with my family," Booker said. "But at least I got to see them and I got to wave to a lot of friends. That's better than what we've getting."

McGee, from Flint, also had a large contingent of family and friends at the game. He was 9 for 10 from the field, taking over after Suns starting center DeAndre Ayton left in the first quarter because of a sprained ankle.

Cameron Payne also had 20 points for Phoenix, shooting 8 of 12. The Suns have won the first three games on their four-game trip and six of seven to improve to 33-9. They are an NBA-best 16-4 on the road.

"We had two 39-point quarters, so we were obviously hitting shots," coach Monty Williams said. "Detroit wears teams out by getting into the paint and getting to the line,



Phoenix Suns center JaVale McGee (00) is defended by Detroit Pistons center Isaiah Stewart during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022, in Detroit.

and we were able to stay away from a lot of that."

Pistons rookie Cade Cunningham had 21 points before being ejected in the third quarter.

Cory Joseph also had 21 points for Detroit. The Pistons are 5-4 in 2022 after finishing 2021 with 18 losses in 19 games.

"That's a championship-tier team, and we're not at that level yet," Pistons coach Dwane Casey said. "We know that, and there's not much we can do about it right now. When we did things well, they

were able to match us. Playing teams like that is how a young team learns to win."

Phoenix built a 64-54 half-time lead behind 21 points from Booker, and McGee scored eight points in the first three minutes of the third to push the margin to 15.

"We knew they were going to attack us any time Book came off the floor," Payne said. "When you're on the second unit, you know the biggest priority is getting stops. We're not calling a lot of plays—we're just trying to get points in transition."

It was 79-60 when the Pistons switched to a zone defense, but Jae Crowder promptly hit a pair of 3-pointers to keep Phoenix comfortably ahead.

After Booker blew through the defense for a dunk, Cunningham answered with a reverse dunk at the other end to make it 89-69. Cunningham pointed at Booker after the play and was called for his second technical foul of the game, ending his night.

"I guess they saw him pointing at someone and thought it was the guy he dunked on,"

Casey said. "I've certainly seen worse things than that not get called."

Timberwolves 119 , Warriors 99

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns had 26 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Minnesota past worn-out Golden State Warriors, which played without star Steph Curry.

Jaylen Nowell scored 17 points and Malik Beasley added in 16 on five second-half 3-pointers on an especially productive night for the reserves. The Timberwolves

outscored a Warriors team wrapping up a four-game trip 40-19 in the last 16 minutes.

Jordan Poole scored 20 points and Jonathan Kuminga had 19 points for the Warriors. They played again without Draymond Green and lost for the fifth time in seven games.

Jazz 125, Nuggets 102

In Denver, Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 19 rebounds in his return to Utah's lineup, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points and the Jazz beat Denver.

Gobert missed the previous five games after testing positive for COVID-19. Bojan Bogdanovic finished with 21 points to help the Jazz end a four-game skid.

Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 15 rebounds and 14 assists for Denver for his second triple-double in two days. He tied the Los Angeles Lakers' Russell Westbrook for the most in the NBA this season with nine, and has 66 in his career.

Rockets 118, Kings 112

In Sacramento, Calif., Christian Wood had 23 points and 14 rebounds, Eric Gordon made a clutch bucket with 12.5 seconds left and Houston beat Sacramento to split a two-game set.

Kevin Porter Jr. added 23 points and seven assists to help the Rockets rebound from a 126-114 loss Friday night in Sacramento.

Buddy Hield scored 27 points for Sacramento.

As NBA prepares to celebrate King, Robertson also remembers

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Officially, NBA players began participating in games that were scheduled to celebrate and honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1986 when the federal holiday commemorating the civil-rights leader was observed for the first time.

Oscar Robertson knows the tradition dates long before that.

King was shot and killed while standing on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. A day later, Robertson began planning a benefit game in King's memory—and on Aug. 15 of that year, on an outdoor court in New York, he was among 27 NBA players

who wound up taking part.

Among those on the court that night: Wilt Chamberlain, Lenny Wilkens, Dave Bing, Dave DeBusschere, Willis Reed, Walt Bellamy and many others.

"What happened years ago with Dr. King is still part of our social fiber," the 83-year-old Robertson said.

The annual reminder of that comes Monday, on the annual celebration of the King holiday. The NBA has scheduled 12 games — including the traditional home games in King's birthplace of Atlanta and in Memphis, where he was killed at 39.

Memphis hosts Chicago in a matchup of two of the league's biggest surprises so far this season, while Atlanta will host reigning NBA champion

Milwaukee. And Robertson believes it's critical players in this generation are reminded of what those who preceded them in the game had to endure as the NBA celebrates its 75th anniversary.

"When I was younger there were so many things couldn't do," Robertson said. "I couldn't go here or there, had to ride in the back of the bus when I went back to see my grandparents in Tennessee, and all these types of things. But these things, you become aware of them. The players today didn't have to go through any of that. They've only read about it."

NBA teams have been paying tribute to King in many ways in recent days. Teams have been warming up in shirts bearing the message "Now is

the time to make justice a reality for all," a nod to a line he used in his famous "I Have A Dream" speech in 1963.

Some teams are also taking part in other ways; 10 clubs are planning youth events in their cities as part of the "Team Up For Change" initiative that focuses on "uniting, inspiring and activating around a shared commitment and call for racial equality and social justice." The Washington Wizards held a roundtable discussion late last week on how King still impacts the push for social change—and Wizards forward Daniel Gafford said it's important for even pro athletes to find time to help their communities.

"There's 24 hours in a day," Gafford said. "There's always time you can put in."

Robertson still has vivid memories of a college tournament he played in, the 1958 Dixie Classic in North Carolina, an event that featured his Cincinnati team and Michigan State, among others.

And he recalls how he and Michigan State's Johnny Green stood out in that event.

"We might have been the only two Black guys in the arena," Robertson said. "That was the way things progressed. I'm so glad it's gotten better."

Robertson was the third president—and first Black president—of the National Basketball Players Association, and he urged players to participate in that August 1968 exhibition that doubled as a two-hour telethon. It was broadcast on television in

Osaka, Nadal advance in Australia after Djokovic flies home

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—The first test of Naomi Osaka’s new approach to tennis might have been when she completely whiffed on an overhead to give her opponent a break point on Day 1 of the no-Novak-Djokovic Australian Open.

Osaka didn’t chuck her racket. She didn’t roll her eyes. She smiled.

“There are situations where I previously would get upset. But at this point in my life, like, I’m here because I want to be here and because I find that it’s fun for me,” Osaka said. “Might as well enjoy it while I still can.”

In Osaka’s mind, the drama involving nine-time champion Djokovic’s deportation on the eve of the Australian Open was something for the players in the men’s draw to worry about. Osaka’s title defense began smoothly enough: She won the first five games on the way to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Camila Osorio on the tournament’s main court.

With so much attention on the 11-day saga of Djokovic’s attempt to participate in the year’s first Grand Slam tournament, and bid for a fourth consecutive title at Melbourne Park, the returns of Osaka and Rafael Nadal have been overshadowed.

Osaka wasn’t bothered by that. Nadal didn’t seem to be put off by it, either, renew-



Naomi Osaka of Japan reacts during her first round match against Camila Osorio of Colombia at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022.

ing his bid for a record 21st Grand Slam singles title with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win over Marcos Giron.

“Growing up, I’ve looked up to him,” said Giron, a 28-year-old from the U.S. “He’s one the absolute legends of the game.”

Nadal is tied with Djokovic and Roger Federer with 20 major singles titles each, the most in the history of men’s tennis. With Djokovic unable to defend his title in Melbourne because he didn’t meet Australia’s strict COVID-19 vaccination criteria, the door is slightly more ajar to Nadal.

Osaka’s main concern, meanwhile, is winning a fifth major title, and her third at the Australian Open.

“To be completely honest, it

didn’t really affect me,” Osaka said about what went on with Djokovic. “My goal, like even before this whole situation, is to just focus on myself more, what I need to do to become better.

“Me, I’m a tennis player. I’ll focus on my matches. You as, I guess, an audience, focus on whatever is in the news, no?”

After winning here last year, capturing her second Australian Open title in three years, Osaka pulled out of the 2021 French Open before the second round, then sat out Wimbledon. She played at the Tokyo Olympics, where she lit the cauldron, but ended her 2021 season early after a third-round loss and a teary news conference at the U.S. Open.

Two of her goals for 2022, she said last week, were to stay completely composed on the court and off, and to enjoy the game.

And, yes, finally, the focus was on tennis in Australia. And it got started in a big way, with a combined 64 matches scheduled on Day 1 in men’s and women’s singles.

Fifth-seeded Maria Sakkari started the program in Rod Laver Arena with a 6-4, 7-6 (2) win over Tatjana Maria.

Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic beat Kristina Mladenovic 6-4, 6-3, moving into a second-round match against Amanda Anisimova, and 15th-seeded Elina Svitolina got past Fiona Ferro 6-1, 7-6 (4).

Anisimova, a 20-year-old

American who is coming off a title in a tune-up event held at Melbourne Park, described what went on with Djokovic as “a very messy situation.”

“It’s very complicated,” Anisimova said after her 2-6, 6-4, 6—3 win over qualifier Arianne Hartono. “So, I mean, you can take either side . . . It’s honestly very sad that it had to end that way.”

On the men’s side, No. 14 Denis Shapovalov followed up his win with Canada in the ATP Cup with a 7-6 (3), 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (3) win over Laslo Djere.

Also advancing were No. 16 Cristian Garin, No. 17 Gael Monfils, No. 28 Karen Khachanov and No. 31 Carlos Alcaraz.

Nadal won the Australian

Open in 2009 and is the only past champion in the men’s bracket after Djokovic’s late withdrawal Sunday. On Monday, he landed in Dubai, then caught a flight to Belgrade.

Monday was Nadal’s first appearance at a major since he lost to Djokovic in the semifinals of the French Open. He missed Wimbledon because of fatigue, skipped the U.S. Open with a painful left foot and, after recovering from COVID-19, started 2022 with a title in a tuneup tournament in Melbourne.

“Honestly, it’s been very tough moments and there are still doubts,” Nadal said. “But here I am and I can’t be happier to be back in this amazing stadium. It’s fantastic.”

Djokovic had been scheduled to play Monday night’s last match in Laver, following No. 1-ranked woman Ash Barty’s contest, but instead the 34-year-old Serb was on his way home.

The top-ranked Djokovic’s ultimately unsuccessful bid to mount a title defense involved two court hearings and time in immigration hotel detention.

It began when he was granted an exemption to strict vaccination rules by two medical panels and Tennis Australia in order to play in the Australian Open.

That exemption, based on evidence that he recently recovered from COVID-19, apparently allowed him to receive a visa to enter Australia. But upon arrival, border officials said the exemption was not valid and moved to deport him.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	27	15	.643	—
Philadelphia	25	17	.595	2
Toronto	21	19	.525	5
New York	22	21	.512	5½
Boston	22	22	.500	6
Southeast Division				
Miami	27	16	.628	—
Charlotte	23	20	.535	4
Washington	22	21	.512	5
Atlanta	17	25	.405	9½
Orlando	8	36	.182	19½
Central Division				
Chicago	27	14	.659	—
Milwaukee	27	18	.600	2
Cleveland	26	18	.591	2½
Indiana	15	28	.349	13
Detroit	10	32	.238	17½
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
Memphis	30	15	.667	—
Dallas	24	19	.558	5
San Antonio	16	27	.372	13
New Orleans	16	27	.372	13
Houston	13	32	.289	17
Northwest Division				
Utah	29	14	.674	—
Denver	22	20	.524	6½
Minnesota	21	22	.488	8
Portland	17	25	.405	11½
Oklahoma City	14	28	.333	14½
Pacific Division				
Phoenix	33	9	.786	—
Golden State	31	12	.721	2½
L.A. Lakers	21	22	.488	12½
L.A. Clippers	21	23	.477	13
Sacramento	18	28	.391	17

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JIMIN

From Page 20

paign with a bye and a walk-over before nipping June Yu in the semifinals, 2-4, 5-4, 10-7.

Another top seed prevailed in the boys 14-and-under after Ian Choi outlasted No. 2 seed Siwoo Lee, 4-0, 4-0.

Choi had a relatively easy

time before the finals. He beat Noah Lee in the second round, 6-1, 7-5, before earning his finals berth with a 6-0, 6-0 shellacking of Yutaka Kadokura. Choi got a bye in the first round.

Lee also got a bye in the opening round before besting Ki Won Lee, 6-3, 6-1, in the second round. He then blanked No. 4 seed Henry Yoom in the semis, 6-0, 6-0.

NEVER

From Page 20

that after the Mini Games the Saipan Baseball League will assist those guys by proving

equipment or whatever to further baseball on those islands so they can be more competitive,” he said.

It can be recalled that Tinian Amateur Sports Association

In the boys 12-and-under, Ian Chae continued his giant-killing ways after the No. 4 seed upset No. 2 Eamon Tang, 6-1, 6-4, in the finals.

Chae earlier shocked No. 1 seed Ryan Choi, 6-2, 4-1, in the semis to break into the championship round. He beat Matthew Hwang, 6-2, 6-1, in the opener.

Tang was a 6-3, 6-2 winner

over Quido Jambor to get out of the first round before winning his semis match against No. 3 Jihun Park, 7-6, 6-2.

Results of the women’s open and girls 16-and-under and girls 14-and-under, and mixed doubles will be reported in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

The 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis was held as a fundraiser for Saipan In-

ternational School’s Student Council and is sanctioned by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

The sponsors of the event are the following: Mango Six Café, Sura Restaurant, Café 670, All Star Sporting Goods and Boarderline, Joeten Superstore, Plumeria Steakhouse, Java Joe’s, Hyatt Regency Saipan, and Summer Snow Café.

team. My thoughts are they should give two automatic slots for Tinian and Rota in the national team,” he told *Saipan Tribune* in a social media message in late December.

NMIVA

From Page 20

perspective, it is a bit of a relief that the Micronesian Games have been postponed until 2023. The Pacific Mini Games is such a significant event in our region that it deserves all of the resources and human capacity that

our organization has to offer,” she said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Quan admits that while NMIVA is relieved of the postponement, she concedes that volleyball players training to represent the CNMI in the Micro Games in the Marshall Islands may not share their sentiment.

“However, we do know that

our indoor volleyball players are disappointed that they don’t have an event to look forward to in 2022. We are looking into possibilities for competition for them next year,” she said.

Beach volleyball is one of only two sports in this year’s Mini Games that will have events outside of Saipan. It was earlier reported that the conso-

lation matches of the competition will be held on Tinian. Rota, meanwhile, will host the entirety of the triathlon competition of the Mini Games.

Beach volleyball is expected to draw 64 players in next year’s Mini Games with majority of the matches to be played at the expansive beach of Crowne Plaza Re-

sort (formerly Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan).

The Pacific Mini Games 2022 Organizing Committee said nearly 1,900 athletes and officials from 21 island nations have so far confirmed their participation in the quadrennial sports event the CNMI is hosting next year from June 17 to 25, 2022.



49ers hang on over Cowboys 23-17 in chaotic wild-card finish

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Osaka, Nadal advance in Australia after Djokovic flies home

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Jimin dominates men's open anew

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jimin Woo didn't drop a set the entire tournament en route to winning the men's open of the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament yesterday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

The 17-year-old senior at Saipan International School capped his dominant run in the three-day tournament with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over second seeded Morris Villanueva.

The No. 1 seed said he just played to his strengths and took advantage of the weather conditions against Villanueva in the finals.

"I tried playing very aggressive with my backhand and use the wind to my advantage," he said.

After getting a bye in the first round, Woo barged into the semifinals by blanking Jung Wang, 6-0, 6-0. He then advanced to the finals with a 5-3, 4-1 win over No. 4 seed Colin Ramsey.

Villanueva mirrored Woo's

success in the lower half of the draw. He also got a bye in the opening round before subduing Sean Lee in the second round, 7-5, 6-4. Villanueva punched his ticket to the finals after nearly shutting out David Kwon, 4-0, 4-1.

In the boys 16-and-under, No. 1 seed Kwon overcame a first set loss to beat No. 2 seed Cody Shimizu, 2-4, 5-4, 10-7.

It was the second straight game that Kwon was involved in a super tiebreaker as he was also extended by Wataru Kadokura in the semis, 4-1, 4-5, 10-7. He had a bye in the first round and then walloped Daniel Nam, 4-1, 4-0, in the second round.

Shimizu started his campaign with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Daniel Nam. See JIMIN on Page 19



MARK RABAGO

Morris Villanueva serves to Jimin Woo in their 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament men's open finals yesterday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.



MARK RABAGO

Jimin Woo uses a backhand to return against Morris Villanueva in their 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament men's open finals yesterday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

'Never believed in 9th place trophies'

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Responding to a call to give automatic slots for players from Tinian and Rota in the CNMI National Baseball Team, Saipan Baseball League's outspoken president Jay Santos has this to say: "My thoughts are these...I

never believed in 9th place trophies. I never believed in participation trophies."

The Triple J executive, however, acknowledged that players from Tinian and Rota have talent but still not at par with their counterparts on Saipan.

"The players from those island were really good athletes

but we've been asked by [the Northern Marianas Sports Association] and the organizing committee for the Mini Games to put forth our best 20 players to compete and win the Games."

The CNMI will host its first ever Pacific Mini Games this year with the CNMI National Baseball Team serving

as defending champions of the quadrennial event.

"I don't believe in providing automatic slots for those specific islands and the reason I believe this is we're not going to do them any favors as well...The mindset will be 'maybe I don't need to work so hard because I'm gonna be automatic anyway.' And that just doesn't work for me and it doesn't work for manager Manny (Sablan) and any of the coaches (Deron Sablan and Gary Cruz)," added Santos.

The SBL president also assured players from Tinian and Rota that SBL will be assisting them to improve their talent pool so that in the next regional competition their players will have a chance to become part of the CNMI national team.

"They put forth effort and they were talented but unfortunately they just didn't make the cut. I don't agree having automatic slots for those islands and I'm hopeful

NMIVA relieved by Micro Games postponement

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Organizing tryouts for the beach volleyball competition of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 is hard enough.

Now imagine also holding tryouts at the same time for the indoor volleyball competition of the Micronesian Games that was originally scheduled in the latter

part of this year.

Good thing Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Somia Quan won't have to worry about indoor volleyball tryouts for the Micro Games in the immediate future following the Marshall Islands government's announcement last November that they've postponed the event to 2023.

"From an organizational See NMIVA on Page 19



MARK RABAGO

Saipan Baseball League president Jay Santos gives members of the CNMI national baseball team pool a pep talk during the first day of tryouts at the Oleai track and field amphitheater in November 2021.



MARK RABAGO

The Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association won't have to do double time in preparing for the Pacific Mini Games and the Micronesian Games after the latter was postponed to next year.

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